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ABSTRACT

This is the first of two related documents reporting a study that analyzed the text of 26 student-teacher dialogue journals from a sixth grade class as a developmental link between students' natural competence in oral conversation and their developing competence in written language. The first section of the report discusses (1) the purpose of the study, which was to analyze the language itself in order to describe the interactional structure of these cumulative dialogues and the strategies for jointly initiating, developing, and maintaining dialogues; (2) the research methodology; and (3) the goals of the study. The second section presents a brief synthesis of the research papers that describe the study's criteria and units of analysis, while the third section summarizes the study's conclusions and implications on writing competence, topic selection, functional language, mutual interaction/interactive discourse, writing as thinking, and benefits to the teacher. (AEA)

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ANALYSIS OF DIALOGUE JOURNAL WRITING AS A COMMUNICATIVE EVENT

Volume I

Final Report to the
National Institute of Education
NIE-G-80-0122

by
Jana Staton

with
Roger Shuy
Joy Kreeft

Center for Applied Linguistics

and
Mrs. R., Dialogue Journal Teacher
Los Angeles Unified School District

February 1, 1982

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The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the position, policy or endorsement of the funding agency.

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CS 206 82X

Dedication

To our friend and teacher, Mrs. R. and the students in Room 11

Many friends and colleagues who have read parts of the dialogue journals have said, "Oh, that is a remarkable teacher." It is true: Mrs. R. is a remarkable, gifted teacher. But her gifts of knowing how to listen to what students are really saying when they write to her, and of writing back with sensitivity and understanding developed over the course of many years of teaching. For the past 17 of those years, she has engaged in this written interpersonal dialogue with her classes, and she has grown immeasurably as the 'student' of her pupils. In the journals and in the classroom, she sets out to learn as much as she can about each of the unique persons who share Room 11 with her each year. This year, through reading the journals, we have been privileged to benefit from her learning and to be, in turn, her students.

In this study, we honor the 26 students in Room 11 during 1979-1980 who opened their journals to talk with her, and indirectly, with us. We dedicate this study to them, and to their teacher and friend and ours, Mrs. Leslee R.

Acknowledgements

Any research project is made possible only through a cooperative partnership of many who contribute their ideas and support to those few people who are directly involved. We want to acknowledge the contributions of a number of individuals who have made this project a far more satisfying experience than it would otherwise have been, and who deserve to share credit for any merits of the final product.

As Principal Investigator, I wish to acknowledge first the contributions of my co-investigators and authors, Roger Shuy and Joy Kreeft. This particular research effort grew out of the framework of Roger Shuy's research on language in social contexts as a functional communicative event, and has benefited immeasurably from his expertise and wisdom as its Project Director. Joy Kreeft's participation in every aspect of the analysis made possible a far more comprehensive study than was initially planned, and she has contributed greatly by her knowledge of language development and discourse analysis.

All three of us also shared a fourth co-researcher, Mrs. R., as our partner and chief critic in the study. She has helped focus and stimulate our thinking through many hours of discussion, and has kept us from being lost in academic quagmires by sharing her understanding of the communicative event itself.

We also wish to give special commendation to the administrators of the Los Angeles Unified School District, most particularly the principal of the school where the dialogue journal writing occurred, who saw the value in this research and gave us such excellent cooperation. The parents of the students in Room 11 are due special thanks for understanding the benefits of this research for other students like theirs, and giving their thoughtful consent.

The Dialogue Journal Project has been enriched by being part of the Writing Research Program of the National Institute of Education, directed by Marcia Farr. A research grant is of most value when it can contribute to a field of research larger than its own scope, and the Writing Research Program has provided such a network of concepts and a concern for understanding the nature of student writing as it occurs in natural settings.

As we sought to understand this kind of writing which shares many features of spoken discourse, we have been blessed with the support of many colleagues in the fields of writing research and conversational analysis. We are especially indebted to Courtney Cazden of Harvard University; Bud Mehan and Peg Griffin of the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, UCSD; Ceil Lucas, CAL; Steve Cahir, NIE; Bill Stokoe, LRL, Gallaudet College; Dixie Goswami and Nancy Martin (at the Breadloaf Writing Program); and Deborah Tannen, Georgetown University. They gave us encouragement in striking out into unknown territory and helped us broaden the scope of our study.

We wish also to recognize the consistent support of the Center for Applied Linguistics for beginning this new line of research, and particularly want to acknowledge those who worked most closely with us on the report itself. Our typists Ruby Berkemeyer and Becky Michael deserve special commendation for being sensitive readers and critics of first drafts as well as typists of each successive version; Becky Michael helped keep us all sane by organizing the production of the final report and research papers with unfailing cheerfulness and energy.

We were also fortunate to have the help of Robby Morroy and Leah Picus from the Graduate Program in Sociolinguistics, Georgetown University, and Seward Hamilton, CAL summer intern from Howard University, who helped with additional analysis of the journals and the inclass writing.

Jana Staton
Principal Investigator

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PROLOGUE

In an ordinary sixth grade classroom in Los Angeles, several students carry on private conversations with their teacher, Mrs. Reed, during the day, apart from regular classroom activities and discussions. If we were there, we would find conversations on a great many different topics:

> Liz: "I can't wait for 7th grade because I am really prepared for it and hope Junior High will be good for me. Time time time is running out because 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th is coming so soon. When I finish I want to do a lot of things and I don't know which one I am going to choose for myself."
>
> Mrs. R: "You are wise to be thinking about preparing yourself for growing up. Each year is important. Each day you should be learning, building a good educational background--like building a strong house!"

x x x

> Tai: "Mrs. R you are so nice and so mean sometimes, and you answered Gordon's question and not mine. Are you mad at me or something cause you acted snobbish toward me today and that made me feel bad. You've changed a lot!"
>
> Mrs. R: "No! I am not mad at you! You know I love you very much. I was annoyed at your behavior because you aren't learning when you don't do your work. Because I so love you it hurts me to see you robbing yourself by not really trying on every lesson. You were not in the room when we were doing the outline on science of the skin. I asked you to wait until the end of the lesson, so the rest of the class could go on. It wasn't fair for you and me hold them up for a question which they've already discussed."

x x x

> Sue: "Read any good books lately? Seen any good plays, TV shows or movies? Heard any good records? Smelled any good smells, tasted any good foods? Seen any good sights? Been anywhere?"

Mrs. R: "Yes! I've read several good books! Teetoncy, Ben and Teetoncy, and Ben's Story--all by the same author as The Cay, Caldwell Taylor. How about you? What's the best book you've read since January?"

x x x

Willie: "Mrs R it's just not fair! Every time I'm close to her I don't say anything to her and she keeps saying Willie will you go away from me and when I don't say anything to her she keeps saying what a pest I am. And you keep saying you don't know who's right and something else I can't remember.
It seems it will never end. Tai refuses to leave me alone. Mrs. Penny told her to leave me alone and she told me that Tai would try to avoid me but she hasn't. While I was eating in the cafe she kept calling Willie and then turned away. May I add that the whole day I did not say one word to her or speak to her or touch her. Do you have some advice because I've done everything."

Mrs. R: "Willie, I know how very aggravating Tai can be. Ignoring her isn't easy nor fun. The more you do it, the stronger you become. She will get tired of it and find someone who will yell back and give her some reason for complaining."

x x x

Gordon: "Between me and you is pure hate. Hate, Mrs. R. Get that through your brain. I hate you. I know you well enough to hate you. I finished reading the Black Stallion--it was very good and exciting. I like math better and better, but boy do I need help!"

Mrs. R: "I'm here to help! If you'd like extra help just say so at recess or at noon and I'll be glad to help you."

x x x

George: "Did you hear the tragic thing that happened to the Dodgers in the Astrodome last night? They lost to the Houston Astros 3-2 on Opening day. James Rodney Richard retired the first 22 batters to face him before being taken out in the 8th inning after a queer double play. If you kept score it went 8-3."

Mrs. R: "The Astros are a tough team and they had home field advantage. To be retired after facing that many batters--and then lose the game must be tough!"

> Joan: "I have just lost my best friend. Jill does not want to sit by me because they will call her names. I don't have a friend in the world. I think when you lose one friend no one is your friend."
>
> Mrs. R: "You really felt miserable with your cold! Then to have the feeling that your friends were against you certainly didn't help."

Who are these students? What kind of classroom has conversations like these? What teacher has the time and wisdom to respond?

What we have just read are passages from the written "dialogue" journals kept by these students and their teacher every day of the school year. Every day, each student writes in a journal whenever he or she has time and has something to say or to accomplish by writing. Students ask questions, complain, tell what happened on the playground, argue with the teacher. Every night, the teacher takes the journals home, and writes a personal reply to each student, answering questions, describing "what happened" from her perspective, giving her opinions, responding with sympathy and with thoughtful questions ("What do you think would help solve that problem"). Each morning, the journals go in the students' boxes (a sixth grade preparation for seventh grade lockers, kept at one side of the room). Before class begins and during the 'business meeting' period which opens each class day, students get their journals out of their boxes and begin the day by reading the teacher's responses. They also re-read their entries of the day before to match questions with answers, complaints with explanations and dialogue continues, with new entries by the students in the journals even before the day begins. Throughout the day, in the teacher's words, "The journals lie on the desk, near the students, in case a question pops into their heads."

Definition of 'Dialogue Journal' Writing

'Dialogue journal' writing is the use of a journal for the purpose of carrying out a written conversation between two persons, in this case a student and the teacher, on a daily basis. The frequency of writing, external form (i.e., this bound notebook) and even participants are all variables. The essential attributes of dialogue journal writing as we have both observed it, and used it ourselves in research and instructional settings, are these: a dialogue or conversation in writing carried on over an extended length of time, with each partner having equal and frequent (daily, semiweekly, weekly) turns. In addition to the *interactive*, *continuous* and *cumulative* nature of the writing, each writer is free to initiate a conversation on any topic of personal and mutual interest, with the expectation that the other participant will generally acknowledge the topic and often comment on it. There will be external, shared frames of reference and boundaries which determine the topics each feels free to bring up, as in any mutual conversation. But a wide range of personal concerns, not just academic work, is acceptable as in any conversation between friends.

None of these necessary characteristics provides a sufficient motivation to explain *why* students and teacher so willingly engage in dialogue journal writing every day of the school year. That motivation comes from the rather unusual *functional* nature of the interaction; quite simply, the teacher (in this case the initiator or higher status or power person), shares the power to get things done through writing with her students. Dialogue writing allows writers to use the full range of available language functions, or "speech actions." Complaints, questions, promises, challenges, directives--are all part of dialogue writing. The direct, functional nature of this writing sets it apart from the usual modes of written discourse we are familiar with. Language uses not commonly allowed to students in classrooms (or in many professional or consultative interactions), such as personal opinions direct evaluations of teaching ("I hate studying India, why India! It's boring."), negative as well as positive feelings, are freely expressed in the journal.

A few examples from the students' dialogue journals are helpful as illustrations of what we mean by functional language--the use of language to get things done. In these examples,

They Ask Questions

Joan: But what is a whole number? My mother and sister and brother could not find out.
Why did you ask me to leave the room when it was Sam who was talking?

Michael: I would like to know why I got moved down a grade in our spelling book?

They Report Personal Experiences

Josh: My hockey team played a game last night for first place and you know what? We won! Now we go to the play-offs. We're the team to beat!

They Promise

Gordon: I like math better because I'm trying harder. And I'm going to try and bring in more extra credit work.

They Make Evaluations

Gordon: Math was pretty good today. But not as good as usual. None of today was.

They Offer

John: For the party can I get my grandma to bake a cake. In a shape of a mogen daived or a Xmas tree. She is a very good cook.

They Apologize

George: Sorry I got a little ansy this afternoon.

They Give Directions

Willie: Please don't forget to bring a book to school on drawing different letters.

They Complain

Ralph: Today was the same routine more or less...India (I'm glad to say) didn't occupy too much of my time. WHY INDIA? It's boring.

Willie: Mrs. R, It's not fair that Joan and Tai keep calling me names, and its not fair because now after Tai stopped for a while Joan kept yelling in my ear and saying Willie your in trouble but I don't say anything and its not fair and if they keep it up I would think about a transfer.

They Give Opinions

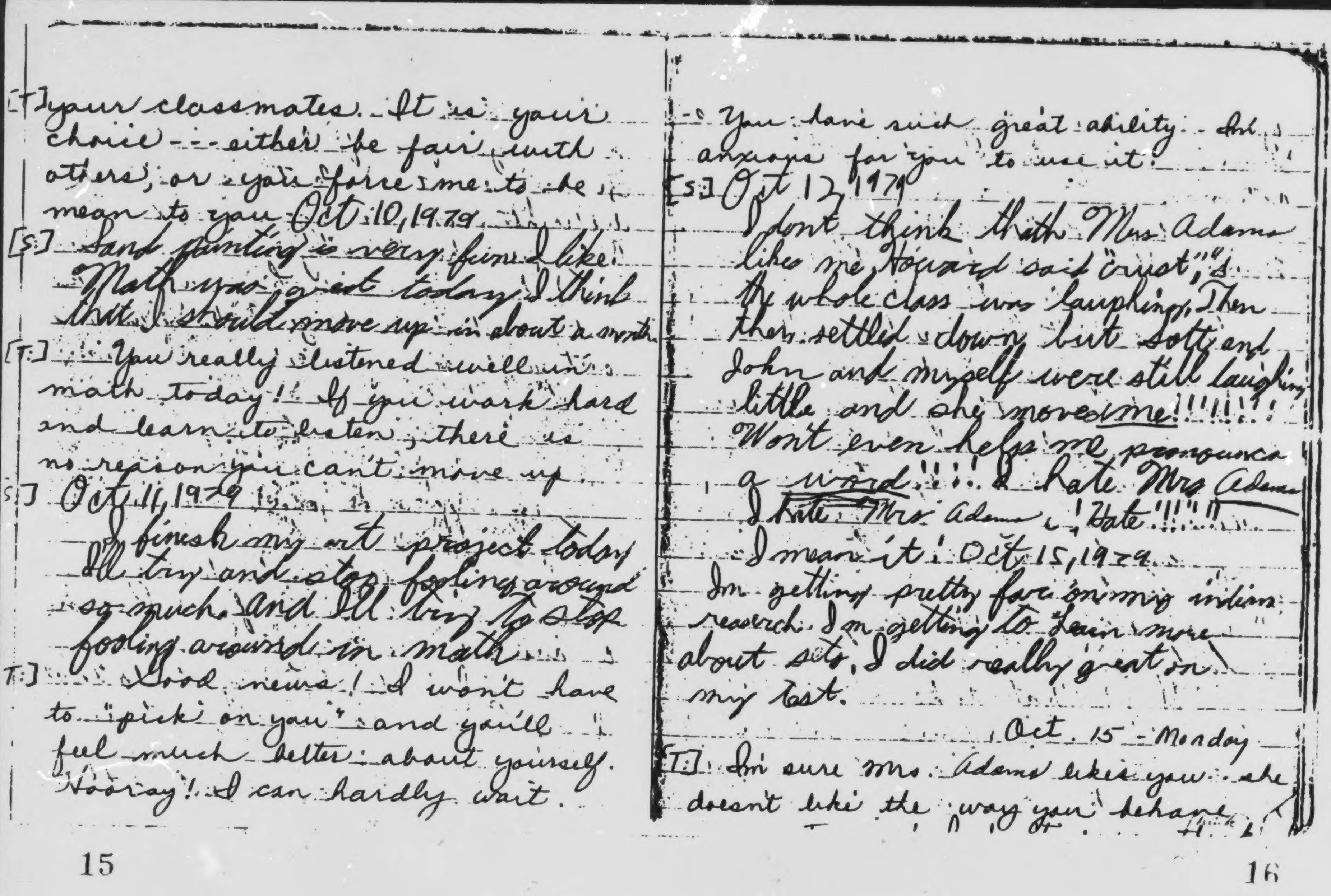
Gordon: Figuring out cube nets isn't exactly the easyist thing to do. But I still like Geometry. And I like it because it is much funere than all the other things in math that we did.

The teacher participates fully in this process. Instead of evaluating errors in thestudents' language or commenting with encouraging but nonspecific remarks (such as "good description"), she writes back as an interested participant, asking clarifying questions to elicit more details, talking about her concerns and feelings, discussing the events introduced by the students. In so doing, she models for the students complex uses of language, and correct spelling, punctuation, and syntax, within the framework of topics generated by the students.

These interactive written dialogues are not used as a "method" of teaching formal writing or reading skills but simply as a way for students and teacher to communicate directly. They occur in addition to any regular in-class lessons about writing stories, essays, and the like.

Dialogue writing draws on the student's already acquired native competence in using the conversational style of oral language, audience feedback, and physical and social contexts to communicate effectively.

Presenting the written dialogue in the typed form, as we will do throughout this report, does not provide the reader with an understanding of the visual nature of the dialogue journal writing as we have experienced it. Therefore, as part of this prologue, facsimile copies of one week's contents from two different dialogue journals are provided on the next two pages .



[T] your classmates. It is your
choice --- either be fair with
others, or you force me to be
mean to you Oct. 10, 1979.

[S:] Sand painting is very fun I like.
Math was great today I think
that I should move up in about a month.

[T:] You really listened well in
math today! If you work hard
and learn to listen, there is
no reason you can't move up.

[S] Oct. 11, 1979
I finish my art project today
Ill try and stop fooling around
so much. and Ill try to stop
fooling around in math.

[T:] Good news! I won't have
to "pick on you" and you'll
feel much better about yourself.
Hooray! I can hardly wait.

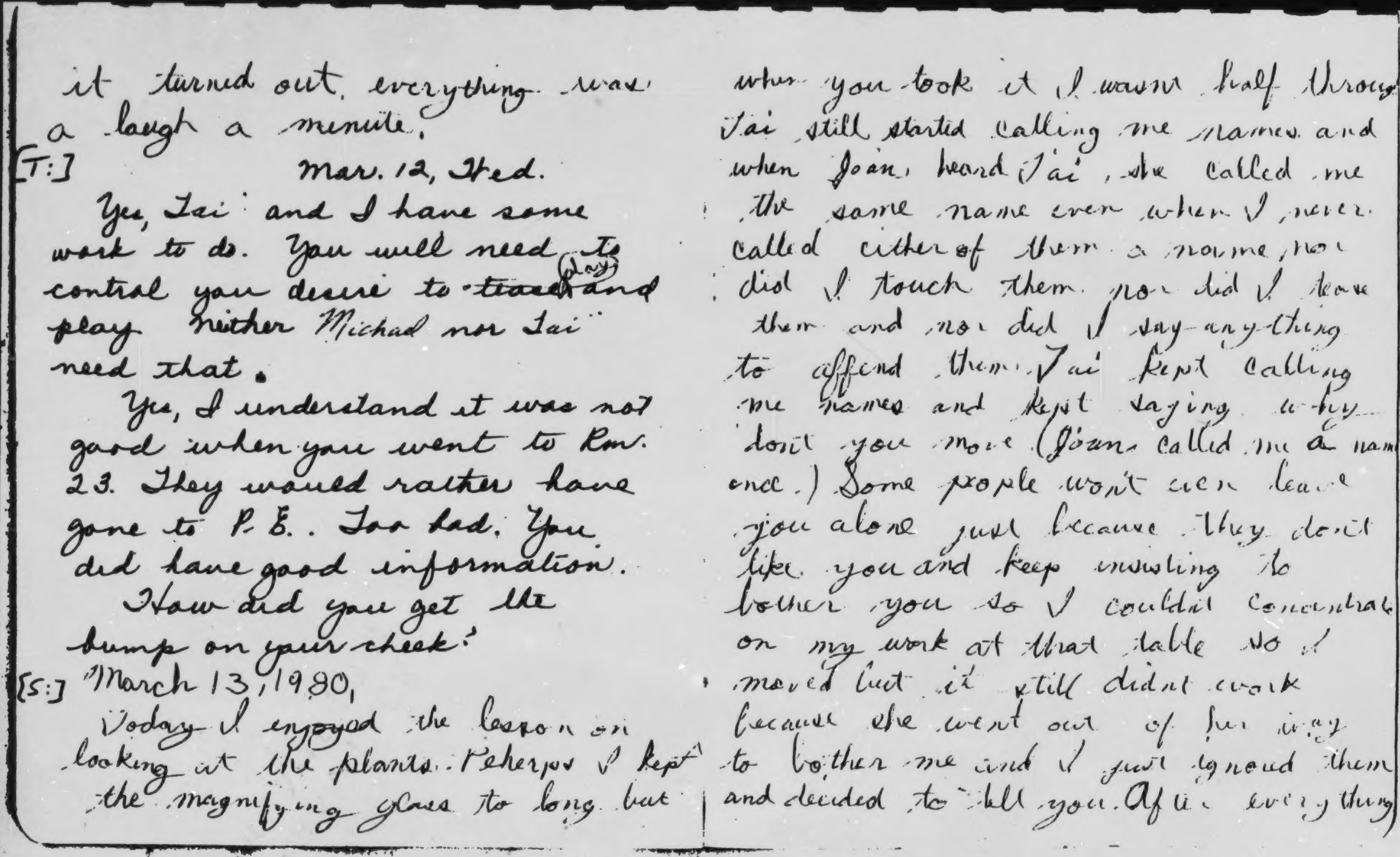
You have such great ability. Am
anxious for you to use it!

[S:] Oct 12, 1979
I dont think that Mrs Adams
likes me, Howard said "rust," &
the whole class was laughing, Then
they settled down but Scott and
John and myself were still laughing
little and she moved me!!!!!!
Won't even help me pronounce
a word!!!. I hate Mrs Adams
I hate Mrs Adams, I hate!!!!!
I mean it! Oct. 15, 1979.
Im getting pretty far on my indian
research. Im getting to learn more
about sets. I did really great on
my test.

Oct. 15 - Monday

[T:] Im sure Mrs. Adams likes you - she
doesn't like the way you behave.

Two pages from Gordon's journal - Fall, 1979



it turned out. everything was a laugh a minute.

[T:] Mar. 12, Wed.

Yes, Tai and I have some work to do. You will need to contral you desire to ~~tease~~ play and play. Neither Michael nor Tai need that.

Yes, I understand it was not good when you went to Rm. 23. They would rather have gone to P. E.. Too bad. You did have good information.

How did you get the bump on your cheek?

[S:] March 13, 1980,

Today I enjoyed the lesson on looking at the plants. Perhaps I kept the magnifying glass to long but when you took it I wasn't half through Tai still started calling me names and when Joan heard Tai, she called me the same name even when I never called either of them a name, nor did I touch them nor did I tease them and nor did I say anything to offend them. Tai kept calling me names and kept saying why don't you move (Joan called me a name once.) Some people won't even leave you alone just because they don't like you and keep insisting to bother you so I couldn't concentrate on my work at that table so I moved but it still didn't work because she went out of her way to bother me and I just ignored them and decided to tell you. After everything

Two pages from Willie's journal - Spring, 1980

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Purpose and Nature of the Study

Our proposal to NIE stated that we would, "study and describe the nature of this unique communicative phenomenon which we have called a 'dialogue journal'...The dialogue journals offer a rare chance to observe and analyze non-simulated, functional writing in a classroom setting."

The purposes set forth in our proposal were:

1. To document and describe the communicative event of dialogue journal writing as a developmental stage in the acquisition of writing as it occurs in a 6th grade classroom between 26 students and their teacher.
2. To analyze the patterns of functional language uses associated with student attempts to define, analyze, and solve personal problems in their academic and interpersonal relationships.
3. To document and present the dialogue between teacher and student as a criterial or exemplary model for the teaching-learning relationship.
4. To validate methods for analyzing the major pragmatic and semantic features of student writing produced in this functional mode.

Description of the Study

This presentation of the study is organized into a final report in Volume I, and twelve research papers, in Volume II. The final report discusses the purposes and goals of the study, and narrates the process by which the data were collected and methods of analysis developed in Section I. Section II, Research Papers, presents a brief summary of each of the twelve research papers.

The summaries are not comprehensive, and are intended as a guide to the reader in identifying the specific studies of greatest interest. Section III, Summary and Implications, addresses the larger issues involved in doing this study and presents what the research team has learned about the nature of functional, interactive writing, about doing research on naturalistic, student directed written language, and about the nature of education itself, as we have encountered it in the daily interactions of one gifted and brilliant teacher and her students.

The Research Papers are the real "work" of this study. Each of eleven of the papers describe a particular line of investigation conducted by one member of the research team--Jana Staton (Principal Investigator), Roger Shuy and Joy Kreeft--into some aspect of the dialogue journals. The twelfth paper presents the teacher's (Mrs. R.) personal perspective on the dialogue journals as an educational practice, taken from our extensive interviews with her. She discusses her goals and values, and the benefits to her, in using the dialogue journal as the core of her instruction.

Framework

Dialogue journal writing is an instance of a natural, functional use of writing by students and their teacher. It is markedly different in goals and in form from much of the writing which is normally studied by researchers on writing. What interested us was the opportunity to observe, to describe, and to explain writing which is not part of a teacher-prepared, direct instructional event or sequence. We wanted to know what students do in this situation and what their writing is like when they are given the power to control the content of topics they write about, when they write to meet their own communication needs, and when they can write as much, or as little, as they choose.

We also wanted to know what the consequences are when emphasis is placed on effective communication of thoughts, ideas, personal experience, feelings, knowledge, and not on correctness of the component or "surface" (i.e., readily observable) forms of writing as a skill--punctuation, spelling, paragraphing, and syntactical correctness. This writing is much like real-life writing which adults do--the topics are self-generated, it is not corrected by the reader, and it is functional. Figure 1, on the next page, is an attempt to characterize the differences between what is traditionally considered "writing" in the classroom context and dialogue journal writing.

Such dichotomous contrasts as those expressed on Figure 1 are always dangerous, for they risk implying absolute distinctions rather than a continuum of possible instances. However, the figure served us well in identifying the differences in the conditions under which journal writing occurred and in helping us move away from focusing on surface appearances toward a focus on function, on interaction, on communicative competence, and on the importance of topics as means for creating coherence in the dialogues.

Rather than try to directly compare the dialogue journal writing (which is with not "taught") with the kinds of writing taught in classrooms--essays, descriptions, narration--we chose to study dialogue writing as a phenomenon of value in its own right. Our approach has much in common

	Context of Writing	Topics	Voice & Style	Evaluation Priorities	Relationship with Audienc
Traditional in-class writing	De-contextualized, or writing isolated from actual experience.	Topics are teacher- or textbook-generated; student expected to respond to school topics.	Voice often impersonal; objectivity and "third" person emphasized.	Focus on surface errors and adherence to rhetorical (discourse) forms.	Not interacti Audience unspecified an does not res in same mode.
Dialogue journal writing	Embedded in shared context.	Topics determined by student; teacher responds to student's topics.	Personal voice; use of "I" necessary for communication.	Focus on concepts and ideas; acceptance of variation in surface forms of language and organization.	Interactive; participants are specifie and known personally.

Figure 1: Comparison of traditional in-class writing assignments and dialogue journal writing

with ethnographic studies, and shares with them a set of assumptions about how to describe human behavior (Pike, 1966). Among our assumptions is that the most useful units of analysis are emic ones. That is, units specific to the system being studied rather than universal ones, established a priori. Such units are not known in advance, but are continually and iteratively discovered in the process of analysis. The nature and meaning of the specific units of analysis are derived from the larger system being studied, and one continuously views each smaller unit within that larger system to ask, "What does this mean?" We found that with each new unit of study--e.g., questions or topic elaboration in the discourse—our analysis lost power as soon as we attempted to apply pre-established frameworks to the study, but gained in strength as we began to fit the particular unit into the total framework of journal writing.

The difficulties of attempting to compare the journal writing with the regular class assignments pointed out to us the very different goals of dialogue journal writing and regular instructed writing. This point was brought home when the principal investigator asked some students to sort samples of their writing, including their dialogue journals and a sample of essays, letters, and creative stories. Students had no difficulty in first sorting their regular writing assignments. But the journals obviously didn't 'fit' into any conception of writing that they had acquired. The solutions they came up with were either to successively place the journal on the top of several different piles ("it's like all of these") or to create a new category, called 'dialogue journal'.

Our goal, therefore, became one of trying to first understand the dialogue journals within the framework of the classroom community as a social system, and within the framework of the individual relationships between each student and the teacher as these developed in the dialogue journals themselves.

In line with an emic approach to the data, we began to search for patterns in the behavior of participants which indicate the frames or intentions which they bring to an event (Agar, 1980). As we began to identify themes in each student's journal, which represented key recurring concerns such as peer relationships, or doing better in school, we gained the necessary understanding of each student writer's perspective, and of the teacher's personal response to each student.

Specific goals of the first year study

The research papers which constitute the bulk of this report are the results of the first year's study of dialogue journal writing. They are united by a set of specific goals which are in the nature of steps toward accomplishing the broader purposes discussed earlier. The goals are the following:

1. To explore how the distinctive features of the dialogue journals are brought about and maintained--their interactive, functional nature, the self-generation of topics by both writers, and their cumulative development of mutual understanding.
2. To develop, try out and describe units of analysis and methods for systematically describing these features, on small samples of data, as an empirical foundation for more extensive studies on these and similar corpora of interactive, extended, functional communication (both oral and written).

3. To demonstrate how one can use the methods and units of analysis utilized in this study to account for the interactions of student and teacher over time, focused on particular topic or set of topics which are of major concern to one or both writers.
4. To demonstrate how the methods and the units of analysis utilized in this study can be applied to individual students' journals, to develop evidence of growth or change.
5. To generate hypotheses for further research which are grounded in empirical knowledge of the nature of this communicative event.

We sought in this first study to develop stepping stones toward more comprehensive studies of the content of the students' and teacher's writing. By concentrating on the communicative structure of the dialogue journals, and the most salient features of how that communicative structure is initiated, maintained, and developed, we have tried to prepare the way for other studies which can use the units of analysis that we used--topics, language functions, interactional features--to study the changes in student reasoning, development of the student-teacher relationship, growth of personal 'voice' in writing, and acquisition of communicative competence in written English.

To accomplish the goals of constructing a long-term empirical foundation for further analysis and for new field-based research in different settings, we chose to explore a variety of features and describe their contribution to the student-teacher dialogue. Thus, we focused on the dialogue journal writing as a communicative event, and did not directly compare the journal texts to other kinds of school writing. We also avoided as premature and inappropriate for an explanatory, descriptive study testing specific hypotheses with statistics. The research involves structural analyses using a varitey of units, at several levels of discourse--sentences, discourse topics, and extended conversations over time.

The result of this initial descriptive-exploratory study has been a set of hypotheses about the relationships between language use and thinking; about the role of writing and of dialogue interaction in the development of student awareness, self-understanding, and competence in writing; about the teacher's role in guiding the students through interaction to acquire more mature language strategies and more mature beliefs and values. These are hypotheses in the broad sense of ideas to be tested, which now rest on empirical data from an intensive study, rather than being simply speculations.

The Dialogue Journals in Their Social Context

A major characteristic of the dialogue journal writing is that it is writing about experiences and events in a shared context, and meets the needs of participants who are members of that context for a means of communicating with each other. A brief description of the particular classroom context is in order, along with a summary of the teacher's concepts and goals which created and sustain the dialogue journals.

Description of the School and Classroom Context

The sixth grade class whose journals we are studying is composed of 28 students; 24 are sixth graders, four are fifth-graders added to the class because of overcrowding in the fifth grade that year. As a group, they are representative of all ability levels, as schools determine such things; there are both students with major difficulties in reading, writing and math, and students classified as 'mentally gifted'. The classroom was 'self-contained' except for mathematics, for which all fifth and sixth graders were tested and regrouped according to ability levels, so that about 2/3 of the students had another teacher for math. The class was one of six sixth grades in the school, all similarly heterogeneous in pupil distribution. Like the entire school, the class was composed of students from different ethnic and racial groups; however, all students in this class were native English speakers.

The school principal personally assigned all students in the school to their respective classrooms. She was particularly sensitive to matching students with teacher personality and teaching style. In general, she believed that Mrs. R. was successful in working with students who were having difficulty in either personal adjustment (e.g., low self-esteem, impulsive, withdrawn) or social adjustment (e.g., conflicts with peers or teaching staff). At the time of data collection for this project, Mrs. R. had taught in this school for 23 years, most of those years at the sixth grade level.

The elementary school, with a 700 student enrollment, serves a culturally and economically diverse student body. The surrounding community is predominantly middle-class, with an increasing number of single-parent families. Unlike some elementary schools in this area of Los Angeles, the school is well integrated economically and ethnically. Close to a third of the school population during the 1979-80 year school year were transfers from over-crowded Black and some Chicano minority schools.

This teacher's aproach to instruction follows an 'integrated day,' in which social science is the central focus. Social science provides a framework for developing reading, writing, oral language and other skills. Students typically spend the morning working on social science projects, often in small groups. Instead of formal reading groups, the teacher uses sustained silent reading time (1/2 hour every day) to develop students' comprehension and love for books. In the afternoon, there are math, literature (read by the teacher), spelling and P.E. classes.

Getting Started in Dialogue Journal Writing

The dialogue journals function in this teacher's classroom as a mode of personal, and very private communication each day between each student and the teacher. The students are told on the first day of class that they will keep a journal each day in order to communicate with her. The teacher says simply that they can write to her about whatever they want to, and that no one, parents, principal, or other students will ever read the journals or know what is being discussed. This guarantee of privacy becomes an essential element in sustaining and deepening the communication as the year progresses.

In the paper on "Student topics: What do they write about?" we have described in more detail how the journals are started, and what topics are most common in this particular corpus. Some of our findings are that as the school year begins, these students generally write brief, three- or four-sentence entries, mentioning 'safe' topics such as field trips, missed assignments, or summaries of the day (e.g., "What I liked about art.") The topics at first predominately involve classroom activities and academic subjects. The teacher describes this early phase as a time for her to "establish rapport with students so that they realize what I expect of them and the boundaries of what I will and will not accept." (Teacher interview) During this phase, students seem to learn that they can comment freely on topics, and express 'negative' feelings, complain, ask questions. At the same time, the teacher's classroom agenda comes through strongly in many of her responses, as she emphasizes and reinforces her goals for classroom behavior and independent learning. By November, a foundation of trust and mutual rapport becomes evident in many journals, and students begin to move beyond safe topics, to mention more interpersonal and personal concerns, a movement which continues at individual rates all year long.

Journal Use in the Classroom

Students are not given a block of time to write in their journals each day. Since the teacher's goal for her sixth grade students is to develop more autonomous learning and greater self-management, the students keep their journals with them during opening business and transition times, and are free to get their journals (from their locker-type 'boxes' at the side of the room) whenever they feel the need to communicate as long as they don't disrupt class lessons. At the end of the day, students place their journals in a canvas bag, the 'journal bag,' for the teacher to take home. The journal writing occurs continuously throughout the day. As the teacher describes it:

> I really want them to write when the urge is there for a journal; if they have to say something that's important. The prime time seems always to be as soon as they have read what I have written the night before...A lot of children will finish a lesson and

> then they will write in their journals. A lot of times they may not have anything to say but you'll see them with that journal open just in case they have a thought that would come to them.
> (Teacher interview, Fall, 1981)

The teacher establishes a minumum, or threshhold communication: at least three sentences a day. If students regularly fail to write anything in their journals, there is a mild but effective reinforcement: they are assumed to "need more time" so they are asked to stay in at recess to write in their journals. Few students regularly need this mild negative sanction, since the minimal three-sentence option is always available to them when they don't have much to say, or enough time to write. One student called it "The old 'math was fun' trick."

One point needs to be reemphasized here. The dialogue journals are not used as a means of teaching writing, and are not part of the regular instruction in writing. Apart from the journals, these students write creative stories and poems, do research reports, describe field trips and write many thank you letters to performing artists and other school visitors. Neither the students nor the teacher refer to the dialogue journals as "writing"; instead, students speak of "talking to the teacher," and describe the written dialogue as they would an oral conversation.

The Teacher's Goals and Values

The dialogue journals are deeply embedded in the life of this classroom, and cannot be pulled out of context and arbitrarily sampled as we might do with student essays. This does not mean the journal writing is not meaningful to an outside reader; rather, it means that learning how to truly "see" the journals the way they were written and meant to be read begins with an understanding of how the specific journal goals of both teacher and students fit into and represent the larger goals of the classroom community.

The teacher has an overriding educational goal for her students: the development of their ability to be more autonomous in managing their adademic and interpersonal life. She views the sixth grade as a crucial period for developing independence and self-management skills in all areas of life. When she was asked what she most wanted each of her students to learn by the end of the year in her classroom, she replied:

> To know that they can make choices--that they have a choice in everything they do. I don't care if they always make the right choices--what they need most to know is that they can make choices. And I want them to accept responsibility for their choices.

The teacher seeks to achieve this classic goal of education, greater individual autonomy, by establishing in her classroom the kind of democratic community which John Dewey envisioned for the which mutual cooperation and respect for others can be learned and in which each individual's self-worth is continuously affirmed. The teacher speaks of this as establishing a sense of "Room Eleven-ness" (her classroom number for the past 17 years). During the first six weeks, she emphasizes the need for trust and fairness in class activities, and begins structuring small-group as well as whole-class projects in which trust, fairness, cooperation, and respect will be necessary to succeed. (In the paper "The Teacher's Perspective" in this report, there is a substantial discussion of how she goes about doing this.) These norms are frequently discussed, explained, and reinforced in her individual dialogues with the students. Within the context of the classroom community she creates each year, students have innumerable opportunities to internalize more mature social values and attitudes and to learn to take responsibility for their own actions. At this age, taking responsibility often involves becoming more aware of what one's behavior is really like, and of the relationship between actions and outcomes. Research on social cognition and actor-observer discrepancies has amply demonstrated the human difficulty of accurately perceiving and understanding causal relations between actions and outcomes when one is also a full participant in the action. The dialogue journals can thus play a major role in developing students' awareness and understanding themselves, and the social world in which they live.

For the moment, let us turn to the dialogue journals as a communicative event that realizes in a tangible way these overall purposes. The dialogue journals accomplish three purposes in the context of this classroom. First, the journals develop mutuality between teacher and student, increasing the shared understanding of experience, and thus maintaining the common values of respect, trust, cooperation. Second, the journals are the primary channel for self-expression, for giving one's own opinions about events and expressing feelings openly. This right to "be oneself", to be different, to disagree even with the teacher, and to complain freely when necessary, supports and affirms the students' sense of self-worth.

The third purpose of the dialogue journals is to provide the information needed to construct more socially mature, or more 'rational,' values, beliefs and attitudes about oneself and one's actions in the world. Much of the teacher's writing involves expanding the student's perspective on the meaning of events, and providing more effective explanations for why things happen. The very act of communication itself also 'creates' new information for the writer which was not consciously known by the student, and it is in this way that the dialogue journal writing is very close to the active thinking process.

We want to emphasize the close correspondence between the purposes of dialogue journal writing and the teacher's larger goals for her classroom. The goals of cooperation, trust and respect for others are exemplified in the journals through the development of shared understanding or "mutuality," which in turn facilitate greater cooperation and mutual respect between teacher and student and among students. The goal of individual self-worth is realized by encouraging self-expression of feelings and opinions, actions which become emblematic for the students of their worth as individuals in this community. The goal of greater autonomy from adult supervision, which students call "growing up," is made possible in part through the acquiring of new, relevant information about oneself and the relationship between actions and outcomes. The chart below illustrates the correspondence between the larger classroom goals of the teacher and what we have determined to be the major purposes of the dialogue journals.

Classroom goals		Purpose of the communicative event of dialogue journal writing
Cooperation Trust Respect for others	⟷	Shared understanding Mutuality
Individual self-worth	⟷	Self-expression
Autonomy or independence "Growing up"	⟷	New relevant information about oneself and the world = self-knowledge

Dialogue journal purposes in relation to goals of the classroom community

Historical Development of the Dialogue Journal in This Classroom

The dialogue journals that we studied have been a part of this teacher's classroom for 17 years (circa, 1964) as the core of her teaching. The journals began very simply, as a means of helping students remember what they had done or learned each day. The teacher began collecting the slips on which they had written their accounts of the day, and became fascinated with the variety of their comments, questions, and observations. She began writing back, and soon a dialogue began, and a bound composition book for each student became necessary to provide continuity and order. The dialogue journals have developed from this beginning into a full-fledged channel of communication.

During this same period of time, 1965-1980, Mrs. R. sought out training in interpersonal communication, as a way of improving her ability to work with parents and other school staff in her role as Vice-Principal and Parent Advisory Council representative. She took courses in Reality Therapy, directed by Dr. William Glaser, and later a course in Teacher Effectiveness Training (developed by Dr. Thomas Gordon). Both courses provide practical training in the application of psychological knowledge of human motivation, needs, and development, to classroom interaction. Mrs. R. believes that this training made a profound difference in her understanding of students' needs, and in her classroom management and communication. It is clear that this training has directly influenced the development of the dialogue journals as a channel for communicating values and beliefs. A fuller discussion of her beliefs and strategies is outside the scope of this study, but for those readers familiar with these particular approaches, this brief bit of historical information may shed light on the journals within a broader perspective.

Teacher Values for Journal Effectiveness

What does Mrs. R. value in dialogue journal writing? During the study, she began to formulate and make more explicit the implicit values she has developed over many years for effective dialogue journal communication. The three attributes that she looks for are given here, in her words along with instances in journal discussions where she asserts, directly or indirectly, these attributes as her values at those points where a student has either questioned or violated the normative values the teacher holds.

1. Openness, and genuineness of expression:

"Some students really use the the journals to communicate, and I always know exactly how they feel each day."

Example: Annette: Most of the time Joan is bugging people and stuff like that. (Sorry I keep complaining to you but sometimes I get so mad I feel like telling someone about it). That's why writing in journals are good.)

Mrs. R: It is good to complain--if we don't share our concerns, we just keep feeling bad about them.

Example: Tai: LOVELY DAY. I HATED IT. I WISH I DIDN'T HAVE YOU. BYE BYE.

Mrs. R: You said you'd written something bad in your journal today as we said goodbye. I really don't think what you wrote was bad! It was very smart of you to get your feelings down on paper. It would have been rude to shout or yell or disrupt the class by saying what you wrote. This way you put your feelings down on paper and I can understand how angry you were.

2. Interaction:

"...the degree to which there is an ongoing interaction in the journal writing. Some students almost always respond to my comments, and show me they are really engaged and understand."

Example: (February) Samantha: I'll tell you the answers to your questions tomorrow right now the bell just rang.

Mrs. R: You really are short of time. Think we need to cut down on some activities or could there be a better use of time?

Samantha: The gymnastics was great! It was for the best 8 teams! Utah won. UCLA was second and Minnisota was third. USC was forth. Then came Arizona then Utah State then Berkly then San Jose.

- - - -

(March) Samantha: I've been putting off telling you but I really hate studding India. I'm sorry but I can't help it.

Mrs. R: You really aren't interested in any class work right now. It has had me deeply concerned for sometime. Several pages ago (not just sure where) I asked if you had too much to do because you work had been incomplete. Do we need a conference? Would it help? I am available.

3. Willingness to discuss problems:

Example: Joan: Today. Today was fun. The graphs were fun. The english was fun.

Mrs. R: You puzzle me! You were so upset. You found it hard to get started into graphing and kept bring so touchy—yet in the journal you say you had a fun day. Do you write that to cover up your feelings? I really felt sorry for you this morning.

These three attributes define the value system by which the teacher guides her own writing as a standard for the students. The values of sincerity and openness of expression, interactiveness or responsive engagement in the dialogues, and willingness to bring up problems for mutual discussion represent her experience and training in counseling and effective communication skills and her years of experience as a teacher. The dialogue journals, even when they are not specifically focused on personal "problem" events, exemplify the positive attributes of a good counseling situation or any effective interpersonal communication—sincerity, openness, responsiveness, and mutual sharing of concerns and problems.

Student Perceptions

How do the students view the journal? During the spring interviews with each student, the Principal Investigator (Staton) explored student perceptions, understanding and opinions about the journals. All but three students expressed very positive attitudes, but more interesting are their conceptions of the uses of journal writing. In a card-sorting task, all students could select as many as they wished from a set of 12 possible uses of dialogue journal writing (based on statements made by students in earlier pilot interviews). Their choices, shown in a chart they made (Figure 2, on the next page), for a culmination presentation to their parents from data provided by the Principal Invistigator, provide an interesting view of why they found the journals of value. Outranking all other uses is that "I can complain about things I don't like." Only one student of the 26 did not choose this as a "benefit" of journal writing. Asking questions ranked second in importance.

These student perceptions of the dialogue journals stress understanding, expressing personal feelings, asserting one's rights (complaining), and knowing and being known by the teacher, all reflecting their understanding and acceptance of the values and goals which the teacher has sought to make part of her classroom community. Here are some of their statements from the interviews:

Sharing feelings

"I write about a lot of things, even if its something bad, like my ddied. But what I really liked is she could share my sympathy because her

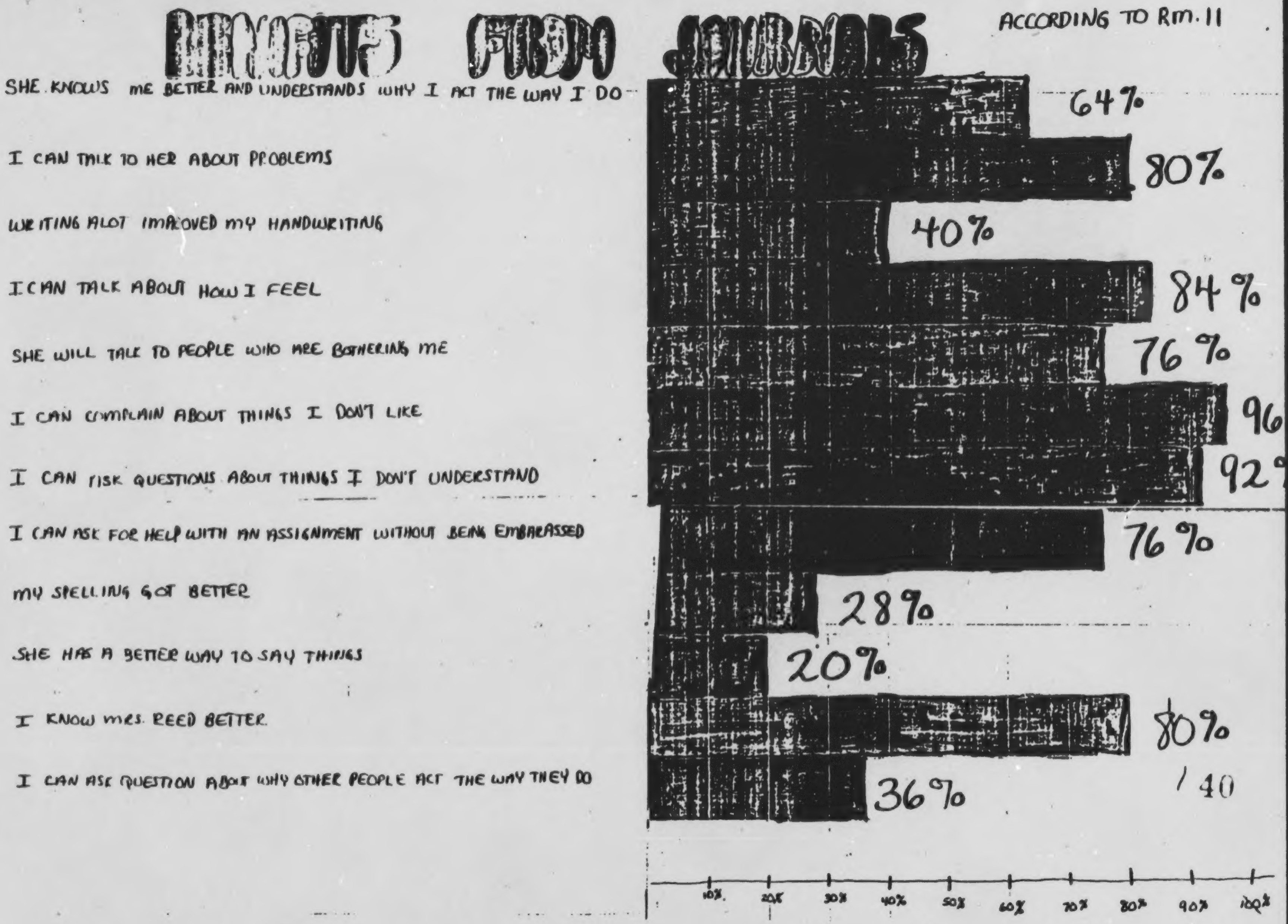


Figure 2: Journal benefits as depicted by Room 11

dog had died a little while ago...and that made me feel so much better that her dog died also and she knows how I feel. I'm not really happy that her dog died, but I was glad someone could share the feelings."

Expressing opinions

"I think that one of the main uses is so that someone can say what they feel. One time we had some people walking around in rooms and they came into our room. And I thought she was teaching us like a baby, and I couldn't tell her that in her face, so I told her in the journal."

Solving problems

"I was having problems with some of my friends, and I told her about it, and she gave me some ideas of what I could do about about it. So I talked it over with my friends the way she told me to do and it really did help."

Being able to get mad nicely

"If I get mad at her I can tell her in my journal instead of telling her in person, and I can do it nicer in the journal, cause it comes out better."

"I can tell her something and get it off my back without carrying a grudge. Cause if I was carrying a grudge, I couldn't get my schoolwork done, and I'd have a bad report card!

Writing about things you wouldn't have a chance to say

"A lot of times Mrs. R is very busy and you can just write down what you want to say to her. And there are just so many things that you could tell her about in your journal that you can't tell her about in person even if she had time.

We should not overlook one of the most obvious uses of the journal—as a permanent, visible symbol of a personal self. In the classroom, the private conversation and one's personal role in it can be publicly displayed and acknowledged through the concrete object of a bound journal, without requiring display of the contents. Further, the tagboard cover can be expressively decorated with personal symbols, names, stickers, complex designs, or left blank. Figure 3, on the next page, shows a sample of journal covers.

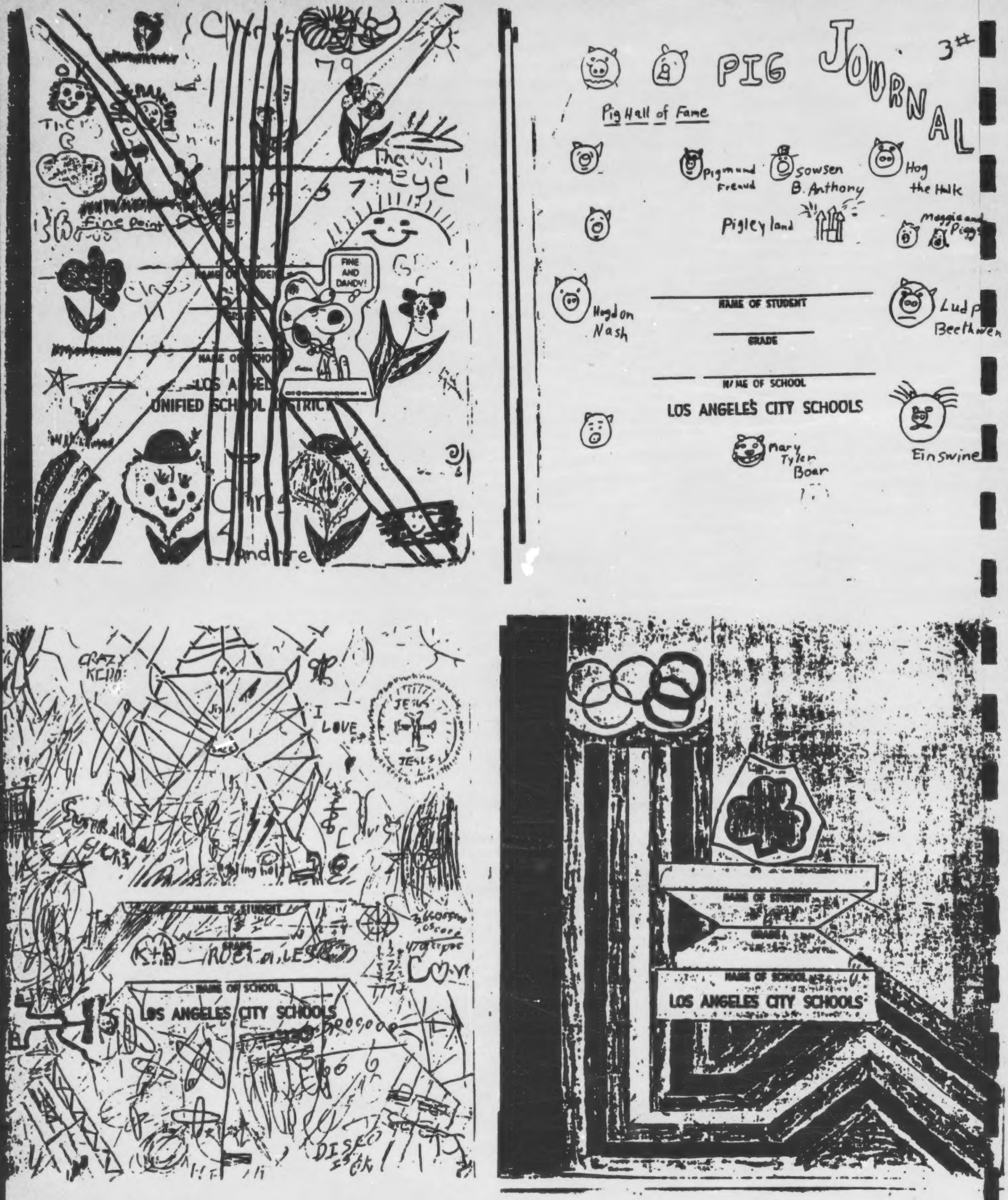

FINE AND DANDY!
LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
NAME OF SCHOOL
NAME OF STUDENT
Fine Point
Eye
PIG JOURNAL
3#
Pig Hall of Fame
Pigmund Freaud
Sowsen B. Anthony
Hog the Hulk
Pigley land
Maggie and Piggy
Hogdon Nash
Lud P Beethwen
Einswine
Mary Tyler Boar
NAME OF STUDENT
GRADE
NAME OF SCHOOL
LOS ANGELES CITY SCHOOLS
CRAZY
I LOVE
JESUS
NAME OF STUDENT
GRADE
NAME OF SCHOOL
LOS ANGELES CITY SCHOOLS
NAME OF STUDENT
GRADE
NAME OF SCHOOL
LOS ANGELES CITY SCHOOLS

Figure 3: Dialogue journal covers from four journals (reduced 40%)

The sustained, thematic content of these dialogue journals, their increasing reflection of unique, personal perspectives, seems in part due to the permanent and tangible nature of the journal itself. Since it is something that students can have with them all day, and even carry into math class, it becomes the visible badge of their membership in Room 11, and of their privileged relationship with a teacher.

Narrative of the Study

Methods for collecting and organizing the data

Working with dialogue journal writing required inventing or adapting methods for collecting and organizing the data. These tasks and methods are summarized here to assist in reading the research papers, and as a guide for other researchers who may find themselves faced with similar kinds of longitudinal, daily writings.

1. Steps in acquiring the journals

It is easy at this point to forget the problems of gaining access to this kind of writing at all. The privacy of these journals during the year is a primary condition for ensuring the successful maintanance of communication. The students were very concerned about the privacy of what they wrote, from other students, other teachers, parents, and the principal. The teacher, as well, would not engage in an activity in which she makes herself open and vulnerable in addressing sensitive issues, without the assurance of privacy. However, the teacher has a strong commitment to learning, and was very supportive of appropriate research on the nature and effects of this method of communication.

Because of the requirements of privacy, and the often-sensitive nature of the contents of the journals, the use of non-invasive methods for interviewing students, collecting contextual data, and acquiring copies of the journals themselves, was essential, so as not to disturb the fragile ecology of the classroom or the trust established between teacher and student. The dialogue journals are the property of the students, and individual permission to photocopy their journals was clearly an ethical, if not a legal requirement.

At the beginning of the year, students and parents both gave their consent to my study of their writing in general (including both journals and in-class writing), and formal approval of the Los Angeles Unified School District for the project was requested and granted.

Formal permission of the students to photocopy their journals was not requested until the end of the year for several reasons. First, this kind of immediate, open expression of thoughts and feelings appears to be more acutely embarrassing and personal at the time of writing than in retrospect; field tests with an earlier class showed a general willingness, once the school year had ended, to voluntarily consent to an outsider reading their journals. Second, students might give permission at the beginning of the year, based on the initial kinds of interactions and topics, and then come to be uncomfortable about their consent as the year progressed. Requesting access to copy at the end of the year was comcompletely successful; no student refused. (Any refusal would have been honored, as our research was designed not to be dependent on gaining 100% access.)

Some of the basic assumptions on which the researcher's interactions with the teacher and students were based are mentioned briefly here:

1. The meaning of any data collected by direct interactions with the participants (such as observations, or interviewing) is always affected by the relationship between researcher and subject. Thus, this researcher spent time establishing her own personal trustworthiness with both teacher and with students, allowing herself to become known and seeking acceptance as a friend.

2. Each classroom is a community with its own culture and set of "emic" concepts: the researcher must "learn the language" and interact with the community's members in order to understand the emic concepts (Erickson, 1977; Greenfield, 1974) which in psychological terms correspond to the participants' conceptual and attitudinal sets. These concepts are then built into the model of the specific events being studied.

3. The reactivity of the students and teacher to having their private communications studied required the researcher to establish a delicate balance between participation in the community and keeping a low profile during the year. I chose to be onsite at the beginning of the school year to interview students (after the first four weeks, by which time the teacher felt she was sufficiently in control). After that, I established a close informal relationship with the teacher outside of the classroom--with phone conversations, weekly chats, an invitation to meet with my class of student teachers--until the end of the school year. This was intended to reduce awareness on the part of the students or teacher during the daily classroom experience that what was being written would eventually be read by an "outsider."

4. In interviewing students and teacher I believed that they were "knowing beings," implicitely aware of the meanings of the communicative interactions in the journals (Magoon, 1977). In the process of engaging in a dialogue with me in the interviews, they would be able to make explicit (to themselves as well as to me) their

awareness of values, knowledge, beliefs, and intentions involved in the dialogue journal writing.

2. Data Collection Schedule

The dialogue journal texts used in this study were collected during the 1979-80 school year. The data collection schedule and data are shown in Figure 4 on the following two pages.

Figure 4. Overview of Data Collection Tasks and Profile of the Data

DATA COLLECTION TASKS CONDUCTED DURING PILOT STUDY

Date	Task	Description of data
October 2, 1979	Meeting with parents of students on Parent Night to explain general purpose of research and to obtain consent.	Signed permission slips from all parents allowing access to student writing, and for interviews.
October 18 to November 9, 1979	Individual interviews with students by Principal Investigator.	28 audio-taped interviews and interviewers notes, with information about student's interests, interpersonal relationships, attitudes toward school, and writing.
October, 1979	Principal interview.	Verbatim notes of principal ratings of students' personal-social adjustment.
November 6, 1979, Jan. 28, 1980, June 9, 1980	Sociograms regularly collected by teacher.	3 sociograms describing student choices of other class members as work partners and friends.
May 22 thru June 6, 1980	Individual interviews with 26 original students by Principal Investigator. (2 students transferred to other classes early in the school year)	26 audio-taped interviews and interview notes, containing information about student perceptions, values, motives, uses and attitudes toward journal-writing. (14 hours of tapes interviews will be transcribed).
May-June, 1980	Photocopying of dialogue journals.	Copies of 26 journals of students from original class, plus 11 original dialogue journal books from students (given voluntarily to the teacher at the end of the year).

Figure 4, cont.

Date	Task	Data Base
June, 1980	Acquisition of student cumulative work files and other relevant records.	1. Files for each student kept during year contain original drafts of major in-class writing assignments. 2. Records of end-of-year competency test scores in reading, math, writing, and originals of writing competency test.
June 5, 1980	Process tracing observation of teacher responding to student entries.	Audio-tape recording of teacher "talking aloud" and field observation notes, made while teacher responded to daily journal entries.
May-June, 1980	Informal observation of classroom during interaction.	Field notes of teacher classroom management and organization, interaction with specific students.
July 14, 1980 through Sept. 4, 1980	Audio-taped interviews with teacher, and taped co-analysis of individual journals by reading through and commenting on each journal.	30 hours of taped interviews and analysis, plus researcher notes. The interviews include: 1. the teacher's concepts and criteria for rating journal effectiveness and student development adjustment; 2. the teacher's goals and intentions in using the journal; 3. individual analysis of each student's concerns, and interactions with her as revealed in the journals.
Sept., 1980	Interview with principal.	Verbatim notes on principal ratings of individual student personal-social adjustment.

3. Profile of Students

A profile of the students whose journals are included in this study shows the group to be reasonably representative of an "average" American classroom as we usually think of it. A demographic profile of the students is shown here; however, we have conducted no analyses which use racial or 'ability groupings' as a basis for describing or explaining our results.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Students in Room 11, 1979-1980

School context: Middle-class neighborhood in Los Angeles, with ethnically and economically mixed student body. 35% minority students attend, most from Permits with Transfer program (voluntary busing from inner city schools).

Students in Room 11, 1979-80:

Students initially assigned	28
Students in room entire year	26
Age distribution (June, 1980)	
12+ years	9
11-12	14
10-11	3
Grade level	
6th grade	22
5th grade	4
Sex	
Girls	16
Boys	10
Academic ability	
"Gifted" students	8
Students assigned to remedial reading	3
Number from minority ethnic backgrounds (no second language speakers)	8

4. Methods for Organizing the Data

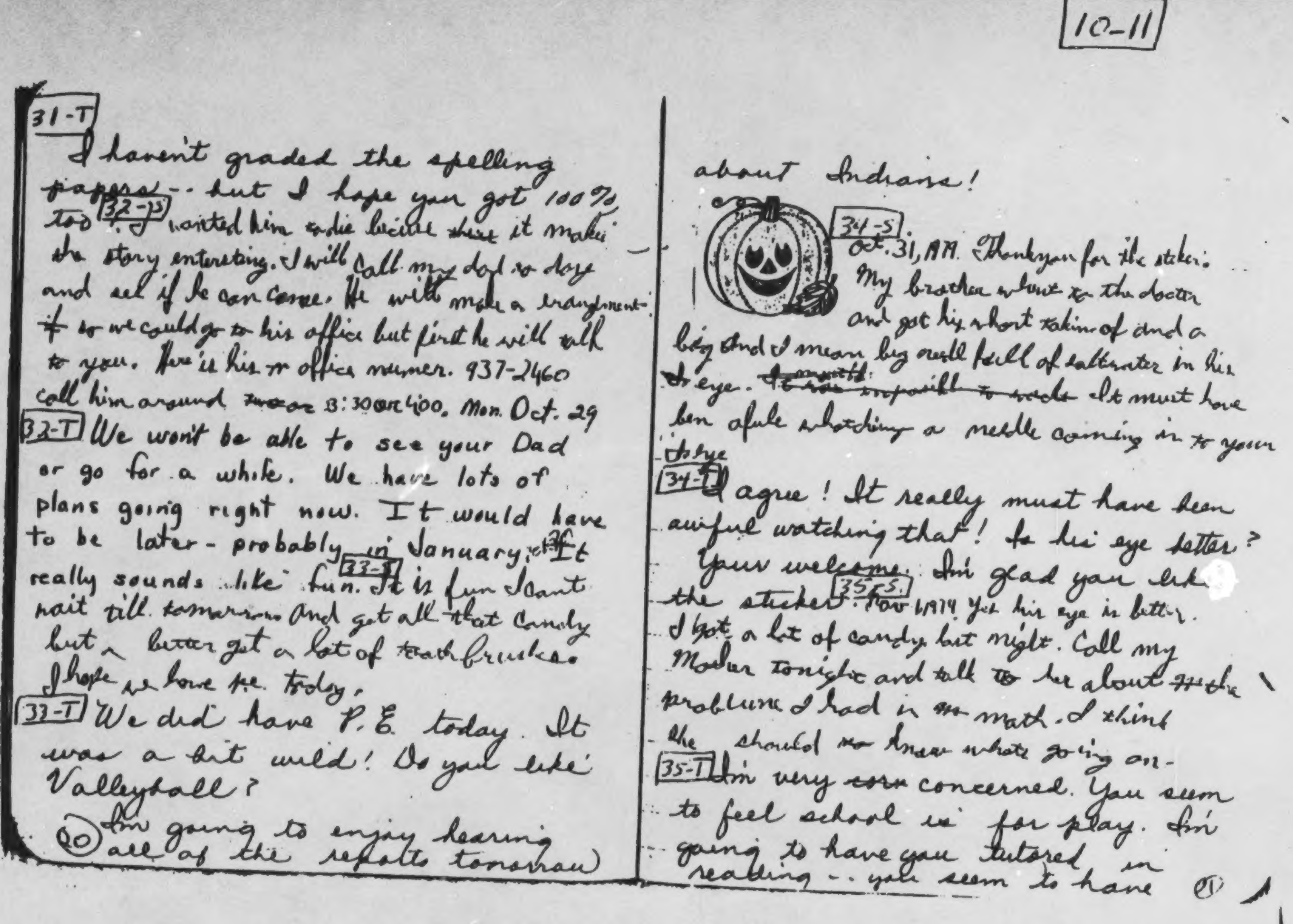
Our initial methods for organizing the data involved indexing and cataloguing the journals themselves. Each student's journal for the school year in this corpus consisted of from one to four lined composition books, 7 x 9 inches. We had made photocopies of the entire text of the journals as the journals themselves were taken home by the students on the last day of class. The facsimile copies of the separate books were combined to form a single, unitary journal. Each journal selected for study was first paginated consecutively and then the interactions were numbered. From the beginning, we considered the interactional unit of the student's daily entry and the teacher's daily response as the basic textual unit.

The interactional numbering is consecutive without regard to days when no entries were made (which was often difficult to determine in any case, since students often, and the teacher sometimes, did not date their entries).

Any portion of text, then, is located by a number plus the writer's identification (S or T), as the example shows (Figure 5). A particular entry or specific topic from a long entry is referenced in our research by this interactional number, i.e., 10-S (student comment) or 10-T (teacher comment).

5. Student and Teacher Pseudonyms

Each student during the final interview chose a "code name" for use in the research; throughout the papers, we will refer to the 26 students by these code names, and have changed all texts so that any reference to a particular student in all journal writings uses the code name. The students' code names and their sex are shown in Figure 6.



10-11

31-T I haven't graded the spelling papers -- but I hope you got 100% too.

32-S I wanted him to die because then it makes the story entertaining. I will call my dad to day and see if he can come. He will make a arrangment if so we could go to his office but first he will talk to you. Here is his ~~rr~~ office number. 937-2460 call him around ~~two or~~ 3:30 or 4:00. Mon. Oct. 29

32-T We won't be able to see your Dad or go for a while. We have lots of plans going right now. It would have to be later - probably in January. ~~If~~ It really sounds like fun.

33-S It is fun I can't wait till tomarrow And get all that candy but I better get a lot of tooth brushes. I hope we have P.E. today.

33-T We did have P.E. today. It was a bit wild! Do you like Valleyball?

(20) I'm going to enjoy hearing all of the reports tomorrow about Indians!

34-S Oct. 31, AM. Thankyou for the sticker. My brother whent to the doctor and got his whort takin of and a big and I mean big neelle full of saltwater in his ~~h~~ eye. ~~It was impossible to wach~~ It must have ben afule whatching a neddle coming in to your ~~h~~ eye

34-T I agree! It really must have been awful watching that! Is his eye better? Your welcome. I'm glad you like the sticker.

35-S Nov 1 1974 Yes his eye is better. I got a lot of candy last night. Call my Mother tonight and talk to her about ~~the~~ the problume I had in ~~m~~ math. I think she should ~~m~~ know whats going on-

35-T I'm very ~~conc~~ concerned. You seem to feel school is for play. I'm going to have you tutored in reading -- you seem to have (21)

Figure 5: Example of text numbering

Figure 6 : Student Code Names, 1979-1980 Corpus

Pseudonym	Sex	Grade
Willie	M	6
George	M	6
Carlyle	M	6
Joan	F	6
Deenie	F	6
Jennifer	F	6
Samantha	F	6
Kitty	F	6
Jay	M	6
John	M	5
Kelleen	F	6
Gordon	M	6
Lori	F	6
Michael	M	6
Lizzie	F	6
Sam	M	6
Annette	F	6
Stanley	M	5
Sue	F	5
Josh	M	6
Elizabeth Ann	F	6
Alice	F	6
Jill	F	5
Tai	F	6
Stacy	F	6
Ralph	M	6

The other teachers and staff of the school were assigned pseudonyms by us, while the dialogue journal teacher throughout is referred to simply as Mrs. R. The teaching staff names and minimal identification are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: School Staff Code Names

Associate Student Teachers in Room 11

Mrs. Adams

Miss Bell

Miss Callender

Sixth Grade Teachers

Mrs. R___

Mr. Keller

Mr. McCarthy

Mr. Nickelson

Mrs. Jackson

Mr. O'Malley

Other Staff and Teachers

Mrs. Lilly (music teacher)

Mrs. Penny (principal)

Mrs. Windsor (volunteer reading coordinator for Room 11)

Mrs. Zamarro

Mrs. Tilson

6. Selection of the Initial Student Sample

To begin the study, we selected a sample of student journals for individual and contrastive analysis in a way we hoped would provide for maximum contrasts from the beginning to the end of the year for each individual student, and between students. Our reasoning was that we were facing a massive corpus (3900 interactions, organized into 26 different student-teacher relationships). The complexity of each interaction in itself, often consisting of continued discussions on several topics, at first seemed overwhelming. In order not to get lost in the mass of data and miss the cumulative meaning of the event as students and teacher experienced it, we tried to select student cases which represented the optimal examples of differences on two dimensions:

a. Effectiveness - ineffectiveness of journal use, based on a composite index of teacher ratings, with corroborating evidence from student interviews.

b. Personal development - including social, cognitive, and individual factors, based on combined teacher and principal judgment of students making the greatest growth in managing their academic tasks, peer relations, and in self-concept (this growth was judged independently of the student's final "level" of development, if compared to others his/her age).

Once this sampling frame was developed, we selected from among the cells to ensure that the initial sample would be as representative or balanced as possible in sex, ethnic background, and academic achievement. These last criteria made our initial sample of cases less representative of the class as a whole, but more representative (to the best extent possible) of the universe of sixth grade students.

Figure 8. Student Sample for Initial Intensive Analysis

Composite Rating of Journal Effectiveness		Rating of Student Development or Adjustment During the School Year	
		Maximum Change	Minimum Change
	High	6 George Tai Joan Gordon	6 Willie Samantha
	Moderate	6 Michael	6
	Low	6 Alice Jay	6 John Kitty

Sample

4 cases of change in development level or personal adjustment with high or low journal effectiveness.

2 cases of little development over the year, but high level of journal effectiveness.

2 cases of maximum change in development but low level of journal effectiveness.

2 cases of little development and low level of journal effectiveness throughout the year.

1 case of a student who represented a 'late bloomer,' with evidence of personal and journal change only at the end of the year.

Figure 8, cont.

Representativeness of Sample

Sex	6 male	5 female		
Ethnicity	5 black	6 anglo		
Academic ability	3 "mentally gifted"	6 "average"	2 with reading difficulty	
"Personal-social adjustment" *	2 "well adjusted and well able to cope with 7th grade"	3 "with some difficulties"	4 "with rough spots"	2 "really need help in personal, social development

* Composite rating of teacher and principal

The method described above proved to be of great value, because the students who "blossomed" provided cases of maximum within-student contrast from the fall to the spring of the year, and the comparison of these bloomers, or students who changed most, with students who changed least, showed us the great range of differences in the teacher strategies as well as student stategies for journal writing.

Developing Methods for Analysis

1. First Steps: Immersion and Understanding

When the study began, a number of possible approaches suggested themselves as useful. Certainly discourse analysis of the interaction between teacher and student, and topic analysis of the development of major themes, or significant student concerns were likely to be informative. In our original proposal to NIE, we had also suggested that the students' uses of language functions would provide clues to their competence in using written language.

However promising, these theoretical frameworks were at first not of much use, for what we faced was a bewildering body of diverse and complex writing--some 4600 pages of written text, with countless topics being initiated, acknowledged, commented on, dropped, and recycled. Our initial efforts to 'analyze' the writing using one or more of the frameworks suggested above seemed to go nowhere.

As a result, 'analysis' was set aside in favor of a process of just reading a sample of journals from beginning to end. As we read, we found that what initially had seemed complex and incomprehensible en masse quickly became clear and straightforward if one read the individual journals straight through. This method of imaginative participation as readers in the process of dialogue journal writing proved to be our first finding: we needed to come to an intuitive understanding of the entire experience by immersing ourselves in the data before analytical approaches could make sense. We not only immersed ourselves in the experience through reading but we also kept dialogue journals among members of the research team (Staton-Shuy and Staton-Kreeft)[1], in order to fully understand the meaning of the experience to the participants.

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[1] The first dialogue journal (Staton-Shuy) was begun by 'accident' in the summer of 1980 as a result of the need to maintain communication while the Principal Investigator completed the data collection tasks in California. After the analysis had started, we were motivated to continue this as part of the research project by our own belief in the process, and by curiosity about what the experience would be like. Another encouraging push came from reading an article by Aaron Cicourel, in which he argues that a major flaw in discourse analysis studies he has reviewed is their lack of documentation of the interactive, iterative process of doing the

(continued on next page)

This period of "just reading" took months, or close to one-third of the time we had for the entire study. Out of this intensive reading of 11 of the 26 journals, we began to see 'stories' emerge. Each entry involved the writer in a presentation of self and of important concerns, which over the cumulative time period of a school year gave us a clearer understanding of the overall themes in the writing.

Although the emergence of themes had been foreseen, the method of reading each journal as a whole without attempting in the reading to categorize or analytically classify the contents seemed inefficient at first. But out of this approach came our first significant understandings of the richness and diversity of the writing, and of the classroom and life-contexts in which they were written. In fact, we had not expected the writing to be as clear and revealing as it is; certainly, experience with children's regular school writing (almost always about teacher-prepared topics and for non-personal goals or purposes) did not prepare us well for the coherent and interesting nature of their writing.

From our reading period, we began to 'tell the story' which each student writer was creating, and the story of his or her interaction with the teacher. These narrations are not part of our study products, both because they contain too much personal data which we are not able ethically to release, and because they are highly impressionistic, reflecting

---

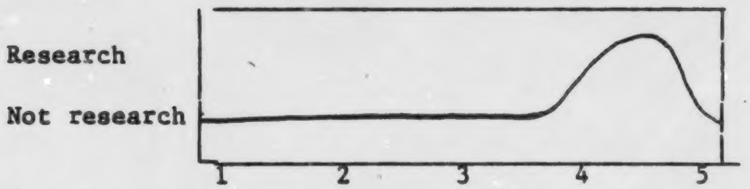
research itself. He calls for a "chronology by the researcher that accounts for the interaction between the materials available for analysis and the kinds of inferences which require higher levels of predication" (i.e., the researcher's own assumptions, beliefs, values and ways of construing the data). (Cicourel, 1980, p. 127). A dialogue journal between researchers seemed to be the easiest and most interesting way of accomplishing this task as well.

our own personal perspectives and individual responses to the text. However, they formed a crucial first step in helping us to see the dialogue journals more clearly. We believe that in studying cumulative, interactive writing, as in studying extended conversations, this intermediate step of constructing a narrative of what happened is an essential one. This is not to say that we did not suffer moments of great self-doubt during this long period when no 'real research' was being done. Some of our thoughts about the reading period were reflected in the journals of the team members:

Writer 1: 'Just reading' the journals for the overall theme, the central conflict or concern, is going much faster than my attempt to note each topic, each language function, and to map each interaction. Because I've read at the journals (in bits and pieces) I think I've read them, but not so. I really do have to read them, before I can do any analysis.
(October 29, 1980)

Writer 1: I'm going to have to read through more journals to understand this world better, before I do any more micro-analysis. I feel like I've wasted time--but maybe the slow reading of the journals first was not counterproductive... But that is scary; it goes against the objectivist, reductionist tradition.
(November, 1980)

Writer 2: Why is it that researchers don't think they are doing research when they first pour over data, read it, manage it, catalogue it, etc.? This is research: steps 1 to 3. Step 4 is to focus on the things that the first three steps point to. Step 5 is to write it up. But we live in a dream world that looks like this. Nuts!



(February 2, 1981)

Writer 1: I'll start the event calendar next week. Everything takes about 3 times as long as I plan for it to take, so I don't get things done according to my expectations.

Writer 2: I had planned to have 11 journals catalogued, numbered and read by Dec. 15--I'm not yet half way there, even with your help. Research is always this way--it flows, but very slowly at first, then you hope for a breakthrough and a rapid race to the ocean.

2. The Meaning of the Dialogue Journals in the Social Community

To undertake describing any phenomenon without at least a tentative framework of meaning which explains the events is an impossible task for researchers. We did not begin the study with such a framework, however, but rather with an assortment of questions--Why do the students and the teacher do this? What do they really get out of it? How does interactive, functional writing work and get maintained over time? We also had a set of assumptions about functional language use and social context, which helped develop the framework.

Out of the intensive reading of the 11 journals selected as a sample, and our assumptions, we began constructing a working conceptualization or framework to answer these macro-questions about the goals and purposes of the journals. In particular, we wanted to understand the value of this communicative event to the individuals involved and to the classroom community they create during the year.

The tentative framework helped us to see the way in which this communicative 'event' is jointly initiated and maintained by students and teacher together. At first, we had tended to characterize the dialogue as motivated by two separate agendas--the students' complaints and problem-solving efforts, on the one hand, and the teacher's goals of reinforcing desired behaviors and encouraging independence on the other. After the intensive reading of the journals, we saw instead the interdependence of the two major features of human communication in the communicative event--the development of mutuality, or intersubjective understanding, and the development of new knowledge (self-knowledge in the broadest sense) out of the foundation of mutuality. Without a growing basis of mutuality, neither teacher nor student could take the risks they do, and become vulnerable enough to learn more about themselves, about the way the world works, about what 'learning' and knowing really are. Only out of this basis of mutual understanding can new information be sought and understood. Parallel, then, to the continuous human need to understand and be understood by another human being, is the need to know more, to seek information about the world and one's own relationship to it.

There seems to be an interdependent, and spiralling relationship between 'understanding' and 'knowing'--once students begin to feel affirmed as persons, and come to understand and accept the norms of the classroom community, they can risk seeking out and accepting new information. This perspective, not surprisingly, is the model of human learning followed in counseling and psychotherapy, in which initial rapport and mutual understanding are the necessary conditions for the painful process of gaining self-knowledge. The teacher, we must remember, is also seeking new information about the effectiveness of her lessons, and she also must confront the sometimes painful experience of having her actions evaluated.

Although some degree of mutuality seems necessary before new information can be sought or provided, these two goals seem to alternate. Each new level of understanding serves as the foundation for a new information search, and new information intensifies the search. Rommetveit, in describing the essential nature of human dialogue, writes that,

> Once the person accepts the invitation to engage in the dialogue, his life situation is temporarily transformed...From that moment on, they (the participants) become inhabitants of a partly shared social world, established and continuously modified by their acts of communication. (1974, p. 23)

We have characterized these underlying communicative purposes of the dialogue journal writing as a meta-dialogue between student and teacher:

Purposes	Student	Teacher
Mutuality	"Am I enough like you to be a person?"	"We are alike, but also different."--Am I like you?"
Complaints	"I am a person and have a right to be heard!"	"I hear you--your complaint is acknowledged."
Asserting Selfhood	"Am I OK, even if I am different?"	"You're OK. Am I OK?"
Learning and Teaching	"Why is the world the way it is?"	"Here are some things about the world--and about you--that you may not yet know."

Another way to visualize the communicative event is as a complementary set of functions to accomplish the goals of mutual understanding and knowing.

	Purposes	
Goals	Student	Teacher
Mutual Understanding	Seeks to be understood	Offers understanding
Knowing	Seeks new information	Offers new information

This understanding emerged first from the perspective of the students' needs and goals. More recently, from a year of keeping dialogue journals ourselves as a research method, and from talking with teachers, we have come to see the essential "reversibility" of this formula. The *teacher* also is seeking to be understood by her students, and she is daily involved in her own search to know herself and her relationship with others. When asked about what the benefits of journal writing are to her, she replied:

> Oh, I'm learning, I'm learning, I'm learning! Every day I learn about nuances of social behavior and customs and cultures. Plus, as a teacher and having taught for a great many years, I'm sometimes so sure I'm teaching a lesson well that it does me good to see sometimes in the journal something that I totally missed. I think the journal helps me to do that because so often the children are embarrassed to say teacher you're a dummy. You said so and so and I didn't understand it. Rather they look on us as knowing everything and they're not going to say that to us.
>
> I think the journals also helped us to develop a comprenhension, too, that was deeper—we worked on comprehension in reading and math and everything else—but I think this was a comprehension perhaps on an emotional level—of values, of moral rights and wrongs, of sensitivity to other people. I think it helped them to understand that we have the same feelings very often but we express them in different ways. And because of the way our families have taught us different things, we react to things differently but it doesn't make one any more right than another way of reacting.
> ("The Teacher's Perspective")

Paulo Freire has contrasted education based on this human dialogue with a "banking" concept of education, in which the teacher "deposits" knowledge into the empty heads of students. Freire's vision of what an educational relationship could be seems realized every day in the dialogue journals:

> The teacher is no longer merely one who teaches, but one who himself is taught in dialog with the students, who in turn, while being taught, also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which they all grow. (1970, p. 67)

Longitudinal and Cross-Sectional Analyses of the Journal Text: The Research Papers

The last stage of the research was to identify the most promising features of the dialogue journals for analysis. By this time, a one-person effort had expanded to a team approach, and we began formulating more focused research questions as a guide to descriptive studies.

(1) What language functions do students and teacher use most, and least?

(2) What are the most important language functions in the journals, and how are they accomplished?

(3) How do student and teacher jointly construct mutuality-building conversations?

(4) How do students discuss their problems in their journals, and how does the teacher respond?

(5) How does a student's understanding of a specific "topic" develop, or change over time?

(6) What kinds of topics do students write about, and do their topics change as the year progresses?

(7) Do students write "more" as the year progresses and they come to know the teacher better, or less? How do we define "more"?

(8) How and to what extent do topic discussions get continued across turns in the dialogue?

(9) What properties does dialogue journal writing share with oral conversation and what properties with the kinds of written discourse valued in schools (usually called "expository" discourse)?

(10) Do students change, for better or worse, in their approximation of the forms of written standard English, as they write without specific correction by the teacher?

Out of these questions grew the separate and largely simultaneous analyses described in the research papers, which form the body of this report. In the analysis, we took specific defining features of the communicative event of dialogue journal writing--its functional nature, the interactive accomplishment of meaning, the self-generated topics, the cumulative nature of topics and concepts--and found methods to describe these features in a systematic way. We knew that the journals "worked" at a global or macro level, but we still had to find the units of analysis and develop or adapt methods, then try out the methods in an iterative process, with gradually increasing chunks of data.

Characteristics of the Research Papers

The Nature of the Writing and the Consequences for Our Analysis

In all of the research, the attributes of the dialogue journal text itself determined the kinds of analyses which would work. These attributes led us toward the use of discourse analysis methods, and away from more traditional composition research methods (word counts, holistic ratings of coherence, T-unit counts) which would not tell us about the way in which student and teacher interacted to construct the communicative event. Before beginning a presentation of the research, it may be helpful to summarize the attributes which are the defining characteristics of the data.

(1) The writing is interactive. Because the writing is interactive,

the features or attributes of interest are interactively accomplished and must be studied in the context of the interaction. This is an obvious approach for analysis of oral discourse, but an unfamiliar one for written text, since we seldom have available the interactional situation out of which written text emerges.

In these papers, we have concentrated on learning and describing how the journal writing is interactively organized; in other words, on its 'structure.' By doing so, we hoped to provide tools for later study of the 'content' of the writing as well. We are ultimately interested in understanding the content of what the students write, but we believe that the content--the ideas, feelings, opinions, observations made by the teacher and students--is inseparable from the interactive process by which it is produced and understood.

(2) Topics occur simultaneously. The discourse is like complex conversations with several simultaneous topics being introduced or recycled in the same interactional event (the daily S - T exchange), and each different topic is usually evidence of a different function or purpose. One striking example of this is the following entry:

> Between me and you is pure hate. Hate, Mrs. R, get that through your brain. I hate you. I know you well enogh to hate you.
>
> Special class was kind fun today. I finished reading the black stallion--it was very good and exciting.
>
> I like math better and better... Boy do I need help in math.
>
> (Gordon, 80-S)

Often such topically diverse entries have been written at different times during the day. Entries also contain within them shifts in the roles of the participants--from two baseball fans to teacher-student. For example:

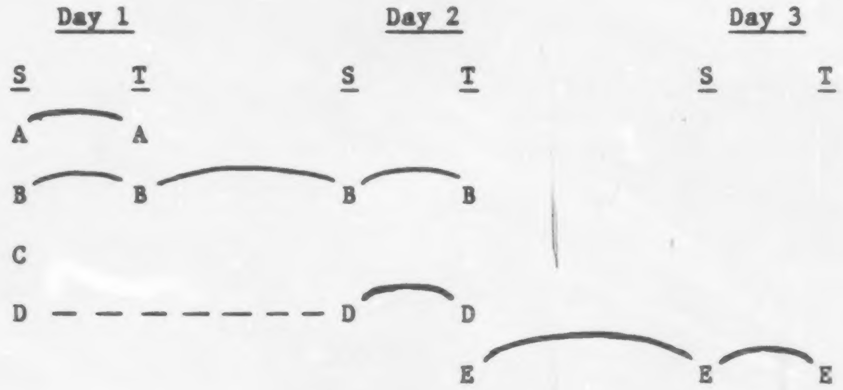
T: If your theory about the Pirates is right they seem to be backing you up! Two games for them. I did think the Reds would do better.

With your love for statistics I'm surprised you found the classification of leaves boring.

S: I bet it's going to be the Pirates vs. the Oroiles. I think the Oroiles are going to win. But, I'm going to be rooting so hard for the Pirates because I hate the Orioles. They win with good luck. I hate teams that have no stars and all luck, and also teams that beat the Angels. This morning's archreology (correct spelling?) was interesting. I don't see what statistics have to do with leaf classification.
(George, 16-S, Oct. 4)

This aspect of the writing sets it apart in a striking way from both oral discourse and ordinary expository text. In conversation between two speakers, a substantive topic is pursued across a number of turns, and may be replaced with another topic for a while, with the option to return to the first. Topics in oral conversation are linearly 'chained' and occur in real-time sequence.

In the dialogue journal, there are several topics in one 'turn' (an entry), so they are spatially organized, with the option for the other participant to respond to some, all, or none.



This overlapping, spatial organization of topics, much different from the topic-focused writing of an essay, means that the entry in itself was not a useful unit for much of our analyses. The entry usually functions as a container for several discourse topics, which are ongoing threads in the continuing dialogue.

(3) Classification must follow function, not form. We also found that classification of a unit of writing, whether a sentence or an extended discuurse, needed to be based on its functions, not the linguistic form. Discussions about what happened at the lunch bench are complaints about some violations of rights, not just descriptive or representational writing, and to understand the writing at all, one must see it as a complaint.Similarly for such deceptively simple statements as "Math was good" and "Math was terrible." Both statements have the form of a simple expression of feeling, but when used systematically over and over again by one student to introduce the topic of Math class, we can only conclude that these are instances of sequencing utterances whose primary function is to maintain "math" as a topic. When writing is functional, every statement is part of a larger structure which has an illocutionary intent at some "nested" level of the communication (Rommetveit, 1974).

(4) Changes occur at multiple levels of discourse. As we became familiar with this writing, we found that changes in the students' writing, and in the teacher's, occurred across time on several levels of language interaction. Even at the level of words, there are functional exchanges over how to spell words. Our research therefore used as units of analysis four levels of communication:

1. Words	- Spelling
2. Sentences	- Language functions
3. Discourse within turn (entry)	- Language functions: Complaints
	- Topic introduction
	- Topic elaboration
4. Discourse across turns (entries)	- Mutuality-building conversations
	Problem discussions
	Topic continuation
	Development of topic understanding

Each paper is an intensive analysis of a relatively small corpus, drawn from the entire data base. Each corpus, or "sample" was selected to represent variation in student-teacher relationships, in writing style, in student background, and/or in time of writing across the school year. Figure 9, on the next page, shows the particular corpus used for each paper.

Figure 9: Corpus for Research Papers

Research Papers	Selected Instances from Entire Corpus	Single Dialogue Journal, across Extended Time or Entire Year	Six Dialogue Journals Across Entire Year	10 Dialogue Journals		All Journals
				1-Week Fall & Spring Samples	2-Week Fall & Spring Samples	1-Week Fall & Spring Samples
Functional language					X	
Complaining			X			
Questions					X	X
Mutuality-building conversations	X	X				
Topic continuation		X			X	
Elaboration						X
Topics						X
Development of topic understanding		X				
Problem discussions	X	X				
Oral basis of written dialogue	X					
Spelling				X		

Tacit Knowledge and Empirical Confirmation

The research papers grew out of our four-month participatory reading of the journals, and sought to provide systematic methods for empirically 'grounding' our impressions and tacit, personal knowledge of the journals we had read. We have assumed the 'constructivist' view that there is no completely 'objective' reality entirely separate from human perception and cognitive construction (Black, 1975, Magoon, 1977, Mehan, 1981, Scriven, 1972). But we have also rejected a purely impressionistic, intuitive approach to describing this phenomenon. We have tried to provide evidence through analysis of structural and discourse or pragmatic features to confirm or disconfirm the tacit knowledge we had gained.

In doing so, we followed some of the principles set forth by Mehan as characterizing a 'constructivist' approach to research (1979, 1981). We sought a convergent validation of researcher and participant perspectives, as much as possible we have included the data--transcripts of the actual writing--in our presentation, so that the data is retrievable for review by other researchers; we have tried to account for all of the data by providing a comprehensive account of anamolous cases instead of dismissing data that does not 'fit'. All of the analyses are grounded in an interactional framework, in which explanations are sought within the interaction instead of in 'independent' student or teacher variables; and finally, we have found participant confirmation for our findings in the transcripts in interviews with all of the students and the teacher, collected before the analysis began.

SECTION II: THE RESEARCH

In this section, the results of our analyses are briefly presented and discussed as a guide to reading the research papers themselves.

The analyses were organized around the defining characteristics of the dialogue journal writing as functional, interactive, self-generated, and as rather direct reflections of the students' and teacher's thinking or reasoning about events.

The separate analyses in the research papers constitute the actual work of this initial one-year study. The purpose of the papers is to describe and illustrate the methods and units of analysis used on the data, and to present the findings of the analyses. The papers' diversity reflects the diversity of this kind of written interaction. Unlike much student written composition dialogue journal writing does not have a single, focused objective against which all students' writing can be measured.

The papers are intended to provide others--both researchers and teachers--with perspectives for understanding how to analyse this or similar kinds of interactive, continuous writing. The papers deliberately described at length the methods, criteria, and units of analysis so that these could be critically evaluated by others, and adopted if useful. This section of the Final Report provides a brief synthesis of each area of research.

The discussion of the papers follows this organization:

A. Some unifying themes and theoretical assumptions

- Oral language basis of dialogue journal writing (Roger Shuy)

B. Analysis of self-generated topics in dialogue journals

- Topics: What do they write about? (Jana Staton and Joy Kreeft)
- Development of topic understanding (Jana Staton)

C. Functional analyses

- Language functions analysis (Roger Shuy)
- Why ask?: The function of questions (Joy Kreeft)
- Analysis of complaining in dialogue journals (Roger Shuy)

D. Interaction and mutual cooperation in dialogue journal writing

- Topic continuation (Joy Kreeft)
- Mutuality-building conversations (Joy Kreeft)

E. Writing as thinking and reasoning

- Discussion of problems in dialogue journals (Jana Staton)
- Development of topic understanding (Jana Staton)
- Development of topic-specific elaboration (Jana Staton)

F. The forms of writing

- Analysis of spelling (Roger Shuy)
- Exploratory efforts in comparing dialogue journal writing to other writing (Robby Morroy, Leah Picus)

G. The teacher's perspective

- Interviews with Mrs. R.

A. Some Unifying Themes and Theoretical Assumptions

All of the research papers share a framework of unifying themes and assumptions about language and human communicative interaction from a range of disciplines: sociolinguistic pragmatics theory, educational and cognitive psychology, philosophy of language. The most important of these themes are the oral language basis of dialogue journal writing, the central importance of topics, a concept of communicative competence, the notion of language variation, and the view of human dialogue as guided interaction in developing knowledge.

These themes guided our decisions about methods, units of analysis, and interpretation of the data, and will be briefly outlined as an introduction to the particular papers.

1. The Oral Language Basis for Dialogue Journal Writing

The use of dialogue journals as a means of developing competence in written communication has strong theoretical support from our understanding of how language is acquired. All first languages are learned by the learner's being fully involved in the communicative interaction before he or she acquires full productive competence. Infants participate knowingly and effectively using gestures and sounds in very complex communicative transactions from birth, while they gradually learn the linguistic symbols to represent their intentions and feelings. (Bruner, 1975, Greenfield and Smith, 1978; Snow, 1981). The other partner in such dyadic language interactions, 'completes' incomplete expressions and elaborates for the learner on the topics the learner already 'knows' and is interested in (for example, "milk" and "doggie "instead of adult topics such as "rate of interest"). Such dialogues occur in a shared context in which meaning or semantic knowledge conveyed by language is at first redundant with physical, visual experiences. The adult responds by modeling appropriate patterns for saying something meaningful about topics of interest to the learner and elaborating or extending the learner's 'thought'. (Cazden, 1979; Tough, 1980). When we speak with novices in a language, we talk about their topics, not our own, so that they can continuously participate in the conversation. This joint accomplishment of communication lies at the heart of natural language acquisition.

In his theoretical paper, "The oral language basis of dialogue journal writing," Roger Shuy has explored the strong parallels between the conditions created by dialogue journal writing as a developmental form of literacy, and the conditions for first language acquisition provided by adults and older peers. Dialogue journal writing, like caretaker-child dialogue, is informal in style and is accomplished interactively. The teacher provides a model for what the child may want to write but cannot yet write articulately, by elaborating on the child's topic.

Shuy points out that these natural conditions for first language acquisition are missing in the usual approach to teaching writing skills, but they are present in dialogue journal writing. Dialogue journal writing is potentially closest to the young writer's thinking and can be maximally supported or assisted by the adult's written response. The beginning writer does not have to write more than he or she can 'think' at one time; unlike regular writing assignments, students can return to a particular topic and discuss it, add details and bring up new questions as often as they want.

Shuy's paper points out that students in most classrooms are expected when they write to perform the equivalent of producing formal monologues in the 'formal' register of written English (Joos, 1967). That is, they are asked to use a form of written language which is least like the conversational style of any interpersonal language used in face to face conversation. Shuy points out that this is the equivalent of expecting a young speaker of a language to give a lengthy formal speech before ever using the language in more interactive, informal conversations.

By setting the dialogue journals on a continuum of language development, the journals emerge as a missing, developmental link between oral language and written language. The common practice of asking children to begin writing by producing prototypes of formal monologues does not build on their natural communicative competence, and offers them no practice in learning to use in written form the language functions they already have mastered in speaking.

2. Communicative competence

Another central assumption that we have made about the writing in the dialogue journals is that the students are able to communicate competently in writing. Much research on writing begins with a model of expository text, the 'essay,' and then describes the degree to which young writers are deficient in producing the model (cf. Scribner and Cole, 1978, 1981). Such a deficit model contradicts what Hymes (1974), Shuy (1978, 1981*b*) and others mean by 'communicative competence.' We assumed that these students were competent at communicating their intentions and meaning, in the situations they faced, and to try to understand how they did so.

The sociolinguistic model of "communicative competence" initially suggested by Hymes (1974) has been developed as a central tenet of the work by Roger Shuy and his colleagues at the Center for Applied Linguistics in the extensive studies of children's functional language

(Cahir, 1978; Griffin and Shuy, 1978; Lucas, forthcoming). This model assumes that competence involves on knowing how to use language to get things done, to accomplish one's intentions and purposes, and that such competence is developed from infancy, even before specific linguistic strategies are available (cf. also Trevarthen, 1981, for a discussion of the pre-verbal foundations of communicative competence). The realization of competence is lifelong and, like all human development, consists of learning new strategies for accomplishing language functions in new contexts (Brown & De Loache, 1979; Shuy, 1981b; Shuy and Griffin, 1981;

As a working model of communicative competence, we also found the perspective of H.P. Grice (1975) on conversational cooperativeness especially helpful. Grice has described the ideal conditions for rational human communication in terms of four maxims, which he claims represent the intuitive knowledge of all language users, and which each participant in a conversation follows and assumes the other speaker is also following. This Cooperative Principle for conversation has four specific maxims which each language user knows. These are that utterances will contain sufficient information about the topic at hand (the Maxim of Quantity), that the information will be relevant to the topic (the Maxim of Relation), that the utterance will be sincere (Quality) and that what is said will be clear; not ambiguous or obscure (Manner). On the whole, we found that the students' writing conformed admirably to these maxims.

The teacher's responses also seemed guided by her more sophisticated knowledge of language use, and one can readily analyse her responses as modeling for the students how to extend their competence. She offers additional relevant information and seeks to clarify ambiguity when it occurs, just as do speakers in oral discourse.

3. The Importance of Topics

Throughout our research, we viewed the dialogue journal writing as organized around topics. The topics introduced and recycled by students and teacher became a primary unit of analysis. We consider topics an 'emic' entity, and our approach thus represents an emic standpoint for the description of the behavior of dialogue journal writing.

Our definition of 'topic' is a pragmatic one; something is treated as a topic, whether linguistically expressed or not, when it is taken by writer and reader as an intentional object or structure of some type about which information is provided or requested (Kates, 1980, Keenan and Scnieffelin, 1976). This definition does not rest on surface elements in the language (such as grammatical subject of a sentence). Rather, it is defined by its establishment in the interactional discourse of the dialogue.

Because we are working with extended, multiple-turn discourse, we find that topics change, merge, and become elaborated as each participant comments on the topic, adding new, relevant information which successively changes the topic of discussion. The dynamic, functional nature of a topic makes it difficult to categorize topics neatly, or to find fixed boundaries, since each comment can become a new topic, and topics, once introduced, become part of a common pool to be drawn on by both participants in future interactions (Keenan and Schieffelin, 1976; Venneman, 1974). In particular, the teacher, through her incorporation of student topics into an elaborated comment, often extends and transforms the student topic into a new, more complex one.

In identifying topics, we generally followed the approach taken by Shuy in his analyses of extended videotaped conversations (Shuy, 1981*a*, *b*). He suggests a workable set of criteria for determining topic boundaries:

- Change of subject focus, marked by lexical devices and evaluative structures to indicate the writer's focus.
- Structural evidence such as lexical markings ('Oh, Mrs. R., by the way') and paragraphs or new sentences (in written language).
- Internal cohesion and anaphoric devices, as the following paragraph shows:

Math was good today. Figuring	
out cube nets isn't exactly the	(lexical substitution)
easiest thing to do. But I	(conjunction)
still like geometry. I knew	(lexical substitution)
I would like it. I knew I	(pronominal reference)
would like it all the way	(repetition)
through. And I like it	(conjunction)
because it is much funere...	(pronominal reference)
	(pronominal reference)[1]

Though no one of these criteria is sufficient, all of them together provide a reasonable indication of the writer's topic, at least for small units of discourse. Across extended dialogue, we viewed the writing as simply containing multiple 'levels' of topics, particularly when we examined how the teacher's elaborations in response to student writing often introduced a broader, more generalized proposition as a 'frame' for the students' more specific, here-and-now instance.

We found ourselves using topics as a basic unit for organizing our analyses, for two reasons:

First, topics represent a meaningful unit of behavior to the participants themselves. Vygotsky, addressing the basic problem of understanding human behavior and particularly human language in use, pointed out the limitations of breaking behavior down into its smallest visible or observable units (such as words or sentences). He defined appropriate units of analysis as those which retain all the basic properties of the whole (Vygotsky, 1962, pg. 4). In the case of dialogue journal writing, students and teacher are continuously engaged in meaningful discussions of important topics, and particular topics thus represent the 'units' which participants intentionally and consciously use in constructing the dialogue. By following topics, we are enabled to see the world and the interactional relationship from the writers' perspectives and to let their interests and concerns guide our analyses.

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[1] Analytical terms are from Halliday and Hasan, Cohesion in English (1979).

Second, the introduction and recycling of topics by students and teacher are strong clues to the writers' intentions and goals. As observers of human behavior, we logically infer intentions in others by observing repeated instances of behavior and then by observing the termination of that behavior in the presence of a goal or end state. Greenfield (1981) argues that the re-occurrence of a behavior, such as reaching behavior in infants or the student recycling of a topic such as 'fighting,'is taken as evidence of directionality toward some goal. When we then observe the termination of that behavior (a cookie is offered and accepted by the reaching infant and no more reaching occurs, or a discussion of fighting leads to mutual statement of a proposition about that fighting and the topic is not brought up again by the student), we logically infer, using out knowledge of what it is to be human, that the individualistic intention was to get a cookie, or to resolve conflicting attitudes about fighting.

While we cannot know for certain during the observation of a stream of behavior what the goal is, we do take repeated behavior as evidence of intentionality and intuitively look for endstates. It is characteristic of the dialogue journals that specific topics, by being recycled, can take on the nature of year-long themes, and that the meaning of these themes and the students' and teacher's goals become progressively clearer as the year progresses.

The three themes that guided our analyses have been discussed here: the oral language basis for dialogue journal writing; the notion of communicative competence; the importance of topics. We have also reviewed Shuy's paper on oral and written language. We will now summarize the rest of the papers.

B. Analysis of self-generated topics in dialogue journals

Dialogue journal writing, as this teacher practices it, requires that the students decide each day what topics they will write about. The self-generated nature of the journal topics sets this writing apart from the common practice of assigning topics for writing assignments. We have stressed in our analyses the ways in which the teacher actively assists the students through her interaction. Yet she does so in most cases within the topic-frames that the students initiate. Except for putting three bland sentences on the board as prompts on the first day of school, she does not guide or direct them in choosing topics.

Again, the right to initiate and pursue self-generated topics is a characteristic of oral language, and one which even young children are very competent in exercising. But in writing instruction, far more than in oral language, it is unusual for teachers to accord students this right--perhaps because of the common assumption that writing is so difficult, so artificial a use of language, and so unlike oral speech that it will be easier if the topic is provided by the school.

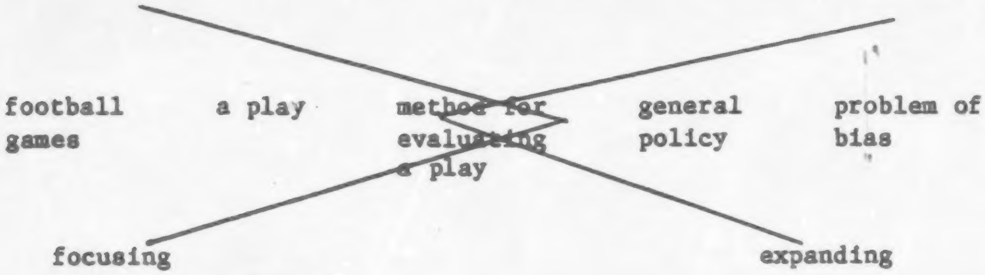
Students are therefore generally placed in the position of thinking and writing about topics they have _not_ generated--a separation of thinking from language which we believe contributes directly to making writing a very difficult event. The essence and value of written communication, except in authoritarian cultures, is the expression of the writer's thoughts, ideas, values, beliefs, and individual experiencing of the world--what Max Black, a philosopher particularly concerned with language has described as a "personal perspective"--a system of concepts, axiomatic assumptions and beliefs, modes of expression of feelings and attitudes, strategies for problem-solving, etc...a way of 'seeing the world' and of acting within it as thus perceived." (1975, p, 263, 265)

It should be no surprise that college students and adults often find it difficult to write when they are not told what to write about. They have not only had little practice in a crucial component of the writing process--that of choosing a topic of sufficient interest to themselves to be worth writing about--but have come to believe understand that they are _not able_ to choose their own topics, or to write about personally meaningful experiences in an interesting and effective way.

An example of the complexity of the topics that we found in the dialogue journal writing and their dynamic nature is demonstrated in the following interaction, analyzed by Kreeft. The example points out the difference between conducting sentence-level analyses, in which topics often seem very clear and sharply defined, and conducting analyses of extended discourse in which topics are defined by their use, and thus change over time.

George	Teacher
S: It's football season again and Rams are certainly showing it. They clinch a playoff berth by beating the Falcons yesterday. I was so happy I almost threw a party. I am begginning to like football more and more.	T: You have only a short time to enjoy football--the season ends with New Year's day, usually. My husband is watching the Oilers against the Stealers.
S: I watched that game, too. Houston (Oilers) won just barely on a disputed play.	T: That disputed play may change football. I heard a commentator say he felt the time had come for the instant replay to step in and be a part of the referee's call. What do you think?
S: I think they should use the instant replay. The broadcasters use it, and they get definite answers.	T: It would eliminate arguments and would also overcome human error. It will be interesting to see how this develops.
S: Today when I read the sports section they said that the N.F.L.'s president said that the disputed play went the opposite way that the referee called, very cleary. The president also said it was a hometown call because he lived in one of the towns playing. He's going to get fined.	T: The referees should not be from the "home town," but I suppose it would be extremely difficult for anyone involved in the game to avoid having a personal bias.

In this example the initial topic of football leads to a discussion of a specific game. The participants continue to focus the topic, first to a play within a game, then to how plays are evaluated, and to a particular call on a particular play. From there, the topic expands to become a discussion about ethics. The diagram on the next page illustrates the progressive focusing and expanding of the topic.



From the initial focusing, the teacher expands the topic to a discussion of human error and the role of personal bias ("a hometown call"). Depending on how much of the discourse we examine and on the framework that the analyst brings to the analysis, we could justify identifying the 'topic' as "football" (from a front end perspective) or as "human judgment" (a teleological, goal-directed perspective).

1. Topics: What do they write about?

In the paper on Topics, Staton and Kreeft discuss what these students do when faced with the task of choosing topics to write about to one audience--their teacher. Because the journal is a private, personal communication, the students move rapidly from the predictable, 'safe' topics of academic events into a rich diversity of personal perspectives on all manner of concerns. Even on the first day, only three of the whole class of students copy the suggested three sentences from the board, and our analysis of the first day's writing shows the immediate variation in topics and comments, which increases throughout the year.

One major finding in the analysis of topics (Staton and Kreeft) is a shift from the domain of classroom 'academic' subjects to interpersonal and personal or individual ones. In the fall week that we sampled, 65% of the topics involved some classroom lesson or activity--art, math, geography, etc. By spring, the percent of topics in the 'academic' domain dropped to 56%, while individual or personal topics increased to 25% of the total.

These results are interesting in two ways: First, the development of a mutual understanding in each student-teacher relationship is evidenced in the students' initiation and continuation of more personal topics for discussion. There is greater individuation and differentiation for the class as a whole. Second, and no less important, when these students[1] write all year about what concerns them most, they continue to include academic events as important subjects of discussion.

It is erroneous to believe that students, if allowed to write about what they choose as important, will ignore the concerns of education. In fact, all of the students we have studied, in both the 1979 and 1980-81 classes, are concerned with their school tasks and performance and freely choose to write about them.

The three domains of topic focus that we found in the journals typify the major "developmental tasks" which early adolescents are impelled to master (Havighurst, 1952). One task is that of becoming more independent in learning about and acting on the world, a major the purpose of school. Another task is to develop interpersonal relationships with peers and even with adults in which love can be given and received--the arena of interpersonal relationships. The third, just beginning at age 11 in our culture, is to develop a healthy personal identity or self-concept. The three domains we chose as categories--academic, interpersonal and personal topic--roughly represent the developmental motivations of students to master these central tasks.

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[1] We should note here that our preliminary readings of the dialogue journals from this teacher's next class of 6th graders (1980-81), in which most of the students come from other cultures, shows a much greater proportion of topics about home, family and the child's original culture at the beginning of the year and a possible shift toward greater incidence of school-related topics as the year progresses. Cultural and language background obviously will play an important role in determining the topic focus of a given group of students.

In the paper on Topics, we depict visually what the teacher experiences each day as she reads 26 journals, by charting all students' topics on a single chart for each day of the week-long fall and spring samples. These charts can help us visualize how the dialogue journals function as an information-rich feedback method each day. Each day, the journals serve as a 'map' for the teacher, describing the impact of lessons, student interest levels and sources of problems, and identifying the areas where misunderstandings occurred. This helps orient the teacher cognitively and emotionally in her planning for the next day. From the teacher's perspective, the rich information content of the journals is the basis for individually guiding each student's learning, for managing the interpersonal relationships among students and with her, and for developing her lesson plans across extended periods of time.

2. The Development of Topic Understanding: Analysis of the Dialogue Between Gordon and the Teacher on the Topic of Math

This paper extends our understanding of the importance of topics in the dialogue journal writing by showing how one substantive topic serves as a year-long frame for significant interaction and development of greater mutual understanding between a student and the teacher about events in the student's life. Although the main purpose of this study by Jana Staton was to document the changes in a student's understanding of a significant topic and to examine his reasoning, the study also provides an example of the use of topic analysis. A single topic--'math' was selected and all discussions referring in any way to math were selected from the complete student-teacher dialogue journal of the year. Following the topic of math as a marker provided a means of selecting from the multitude of interwoven topics a single daily-occurring event which the student and teacher often discussed, usually initiated by the student.

The analysis thus provides a description of the complex nature of a lexically-marked topic when viewed from the perspective of the dialogue journal as a year-long event. 'Math' begins as an undifferentiated entity, but soon encompasses discussions of the student's behavior in math class, his attitudes and beliefs about learning and achievement, the teacher's perspective on what 'understanding' means, and eventually, a series of discussions about the components or specifics of math--division, fractions, geometry, and so on.

Staton describes how the initial topic of math changes through the process of interactive discourse to encompass more reflective generalizations about learning and understanding at a higher level of thinking, which philosophers of human behavior have variously described as "second-order" thinking, evaluative thought, or reflective abstraction about events, actions, and relationships (Alston, 1977; Harre and Secord, 1972; Taylor, 1977; Piaget, 1978).

The paper shows how the teacher appropriates a topic of significant concern to the student as a focus for introducing important concepts, principles of human action, and beliefs which she believes will provide a more effective, flexible system. In the end, student and teacher emerge at a much different level of understanding about the topic of math and about the meta-topic of learning. They are still discussing math, but it is the concrete instance of a larger topic of concern--what learning is like (it's fun), how to learn, and how to master an area of knowledge.

C. Functional Language Analyses

One of our early hypotheses was that the students' and teacher's functional language use would be a key to their use of the journals. The extensive research on children's functional language conducted at the Center by Roger Shuy, Peg Griffin, and others (Griffin and Shuy, 1978) provides a comprehensive theoretical and practical framework for studying functional language use. However, we faced new problems in moving from oral, face-to-face communication to the written mode. As we understood the complexity of the dialogue writing better, we found any categorical approach based on speech act theory to be extremely difficult, because the ongoing stream of dialogue, and the existence of responses, created multiple levels of intention or purpose. For example, one could readily identify all linguistically marked questions, but there was often no direct match between linguistic form and actual function. Two problems in particular were noted:

1. Any given sentence could have multiple functions, and often did within the extended context of the journal. For example, a typical teacher question, "What do you think caused the problem today?" could well be a request for information, a request for reflection (an action on the student's part), and even a challenge, if made in response to a student assertion.

2. A strict formalist 'speech act' classification was of much less use than an approach which also included subcategories incorporating sentence content and topic such as "personal" and "impersonal" facts, an approach more suited to this particular kind of data.

Three research efforts by Shuy and Kreeft are attempts to address the problem of using language function analysis to provide important and useful information about the nature of dialogue journal writing. Roger Shuy's paper analyzing language functions classifies all the language functions used by students and teacher at a sentence level, and then explores ways in which language function analysis can be used to profile differences in writer's perspectives toward the world of events, and in development of communicative competence.

The other two papers on language functions explore two of the most interesting functions in the dialogue journals: the uses of questions and complaints. These were selected because each promised to provide an indepth understanding of how the journals are constructed, developed, and maintained as a communicative event.

1. Language Functions Analysis

A functional analysis of language examines the uses of language in the journals, drawing on the work done by philosophers (Austin, 1962, Searle, 1969) and researchers on how language is used to get things done, to act on the world. In the research paper on language functions, Shuy rejects a categorical approach based on language form, and follows a context-based approach using multiple criteria for identifying a particular function. The topic of the utterance, the context of the writer's own prior and subsequent writing, and the response of the other participant are all used to identify the function or functions of a given utterance. This approach involved a major breakthrough in resolving the problem of reliable classification, by allowing multiple coding of a given utterance for more than one function. In retrospect, it appears that much of our initial difficulty in knowing how to begin came from attempts to reduce the complexity of language use to single, non-overlapping categories. A simple statement such as, "Why did you move me?" in the dialogue journals may function as both a question and also as a complaint or a challenge. This lack of isomorphism between form and function is of course the essence of language use. Rather than trying to specify rules for reducing potential multiple functions to a single 'most likely' function, the paper demonstrates the value of counting simultaneous representations of more than one function.

The language functions which occurred with sufficient frequency in the dialogue journal corpus that Shuy worked with (a two-week sample from 10 students in both fall and spring) to permit aggregation and analysis were these 15:

reporting opinions
reporting personal facts
reporting general facts
responding to questions
predicting future events
complaining
giving directions
apologizing
thanking
evaluating
offering
promising
asking information questions
asking procedure questions
asking opinion questions

The paper provides operational definitions and examples for identifying these functions.

The major research questions that grow out of the classification of each sentence in the dialogue journal writing of both students and teachers are:

1. How do students and teacher compare in the relative frequency of language function use?
2. What can the use of language functions tell us about the student's degree of impersonal or personal approach to, or 'engagement' in, events, with negative or positive attitudes? What can the use of language functions tell us about the teacher's 'urging' of students?
3. How does the use of language functions change from the fall to spring sample, for both student and teacher?
4. How might changes in language functions indicate development of communicative competence?

Frequency and variability of language functions

Among the findings are that there is great variability in the way the 10 students sampled communicate with the teacher, and this variability appears to reflect systematic differences in personal perspectives on the world and differences in student-teacher relationships. This finding is not surprising, but it provides an important contrast to the highly invariant profile of language functions in teacher-directed classroom discourse, as described by Mehan (1979); Shuy (1981c); Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) and others. It also contrasts with the predominance of 'reporting' functions in the in-class writing assignments children are usually directed to engage in. For example, 40% of all sentences in one student's writing involved reporting personal facts, but in another's, only 9%. The frequency of complaints, opinions, and questions is similarly and richly varied. The teacher's responses to students also shows marked variation across individual students; to one, she may report a high number of personal facts; to another, her functions are predominately directives and evaluations.

Quantifying all functions for students and the teacher, Shuy found that students reported more personal opinions, complained more, and reported more personal facts. The teacher gave more directives, evaluated more, and asked more questions. A comparison of the frequency of language function use is shown in Figure 10, on the next page.

One immediate benefit of this descriptive profile is the picture it provides of how conversational cooperativeness and communicative competence are achieved through the wide variety of language functions used by both students and teacher. Although the teacher asks more questions than do students, the overall frequency of her question asking is low (15%), she does not load her responses with a barrage of questions. Students in most ordinary classroom discourse are not much involved in giving their personal opinions, but in the dialogue journal conversations, their personal opinions are encouraged and valued. One important right of persons in any non-totalitarian culture is the right to express personal opinions freely--a right the journals allow, thus communicating to students that they are respected as individuals.

We should also point out the high 'information' content of the dialogue writing which this functional analysis reveals. If we grant to personal

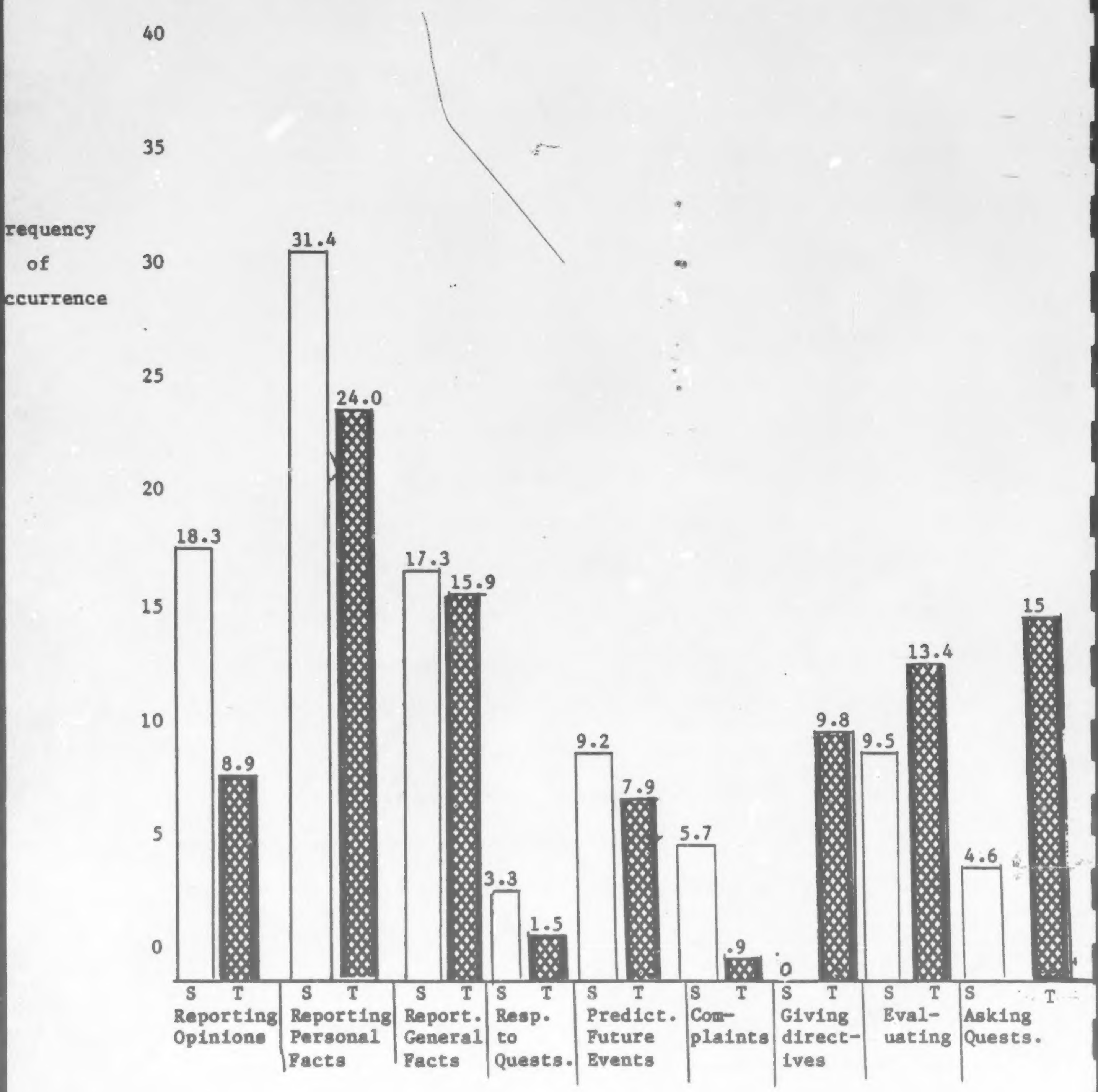

Figure 10: Frequency of language functions in student and teacher writing

and general facts and to opinions the status of informativeness, then the dialogue journals carry a high information load--well over half of all student functions, and half of all teacher functions involve giving information.

Change in the use of language functions

In studying whether students or teacher change in the use of language functions, Shuy finds that there are systematic changes in frequency of use. Students decrease their reporting of general facts and increase in reporting of personal facts. This shift corresponds to the overall shift from academic, classroom-centered topics to more personal topics we have already noted in discussing student topics. In the spring, the students' giving of opinions and evaluations also decreases, as well as their asking of information and procedural questions. This indicates the growth of greater shared understanding about the events and rules of the classroom community.

The teacher's use of language functions changes in an interesting way. She increases her use of six functions for this group of students: she reports more opinions, personal facts and general facts, evaluates more, and asks more information and more opinion questions as the year progresses. This increase in functions without a corresponding overall increase in the amount of her writing indicates a greater complexity of language use on her part. As she comes to know each student better, she is able to increase the multiple functions of her responses to accomplish more of her intentions without writing more.

Clustering of language functions

One of the most interesting empirical analyses is the clustering of language functions to form five indices. This method, in a sense, provides a way for analysing language to demonstrate the basis for the overall impressions the reader has. The clusters constructed are:

1. personal engagement
   vs.
2. impersonal engagement in the writing

3. positive
   vs.
4. negative attitude

5. teacher urging or directive pressure

Although we have not done so in this study, a a next step would be to compare the findings about individual students with interview data from the teacher as a participant observer about each student to see how accurately the language reveals the significant aspects of the student's life.

Empirical continuum of communicative competence

From the descriptive data, Shuy suggests an empirically-derived but hypothetical continuum of functional communicative competence, beginning with those functions which most students seem to accomplish competently and going in the direction of those functions which occur less frequently and which tend to increase from fall to spring. The original 15 language functions are combined into six categories on this hypothetical continuum, as follows: reporting opinions, evaluating, reporting impersonal facts, reporting personal facts, predicting or complaining, and reporting generalizations or general propositions about the world. (See Figure 11, on the next page.)

Most students, early in the year, report opinions freely and effectively and evaluate events and actions. By spring, they do these without

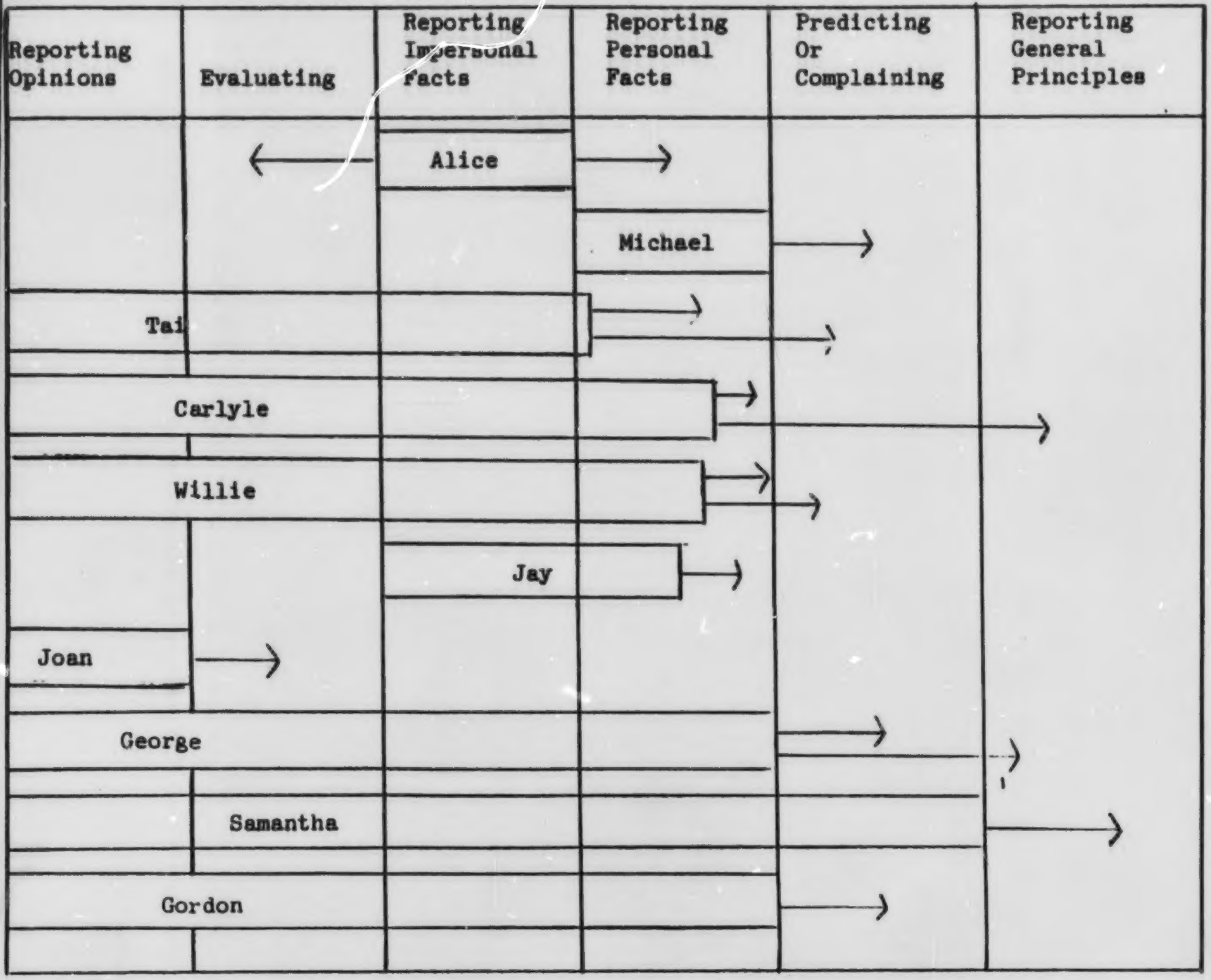
Reporting Opinions
Evaluating
Reporting Impersonal Facts
Reporting Personal Facts
Predicting Or Complaining
Reporting General Principles
Alice
Michael
Tai
Carlyle
Willie
Jay
Joan
George
Samantha
Gordon

Figure 11: Direction of Change in the Use of Language Functions Fall to Spring

direct teacher assistance. Most also manage to report impersonal or objective world facts. The next two categories--a combined predicting/complaining category, and reporting general principles--are at the right side of the continuum; students do not use these functions as frequently and they appear to need more teacher assistance in the form of modeling and eliciting, to accomplish them.

The teacher's actions help confirm the validity of this empirically-based model as representing the basic structure and directionality of language change and the model of competent language use which she brings to this interaction.

2. Why Ask?: The Function of Questions in Dialogue Writing

Kreeft's paper on questions concentrates on analysing the functions of questions in the writing of the students and teacher, focusing particularly on how the teacher uses questions in constructing, maintaining and advancing the dialogue toward higher order thinking about events and experiences.

One important difference between dialogue journal writing and face to face communication is that whereas in oral conversation a question necessitates some sort of reply, in the written communication, responding to a question is not obligatory for the teacher or the students. Students answer directly only about half of all teacher questions. There is an increase, however, in the frequency of response in the spring. The teacher also increases her frequency of response in the spring (from 67% response in the fall to 76% in the spring). This increase may thus indicate growth in the degree of mutuality achieved in the course of the interaction.

Student questions serve four pragmatic purposes:

Procedural questions ("When are we having p.e.?") help students influence the course of activities in the class, by telling the teacher where their interests lie and focusing her attention.

Information questions ("Why did you move me when I wasn't talking?") give students power to clarify problems or misunderstandings and gain more equal footing with the teacher.

Opinion questions ("Did you like my picture?") promote and build the increasingly shared framework of mutuality or intersubjective understanding between student and teacher.

Challenges ("Tell me what I was doing when you were out of the room") provide an opportunity for appropriate airing of anger and bewilderment.

In the functional analysis of questions we can see an immediate difference in student question purposes from ordinary classroom discourse, in which the preponderance of student questions allowed are information-seeking or procedural, and address classroom rather than individual or interpersonal topics (cf. Shuy, 1981c).

Teacher questions in the journal also differ in a major way from those in a classroom lesson. The majority of questions in the journal are about topics that the students have already introduced, instead of about teacher-initiated topics, a tendency that increases in the spring, as the students shift toward more personal topics. In the fall, of 85 teacher questions asked during a two-week period in ten journals, 49 (58%) arose as a response to a student-initiated topic. Thirty-six (42%) represented the teacher's initiating a new topic. In the spring, of the 122 teacher questions, 85 (70%) arose as a response to a student-initiated topic and 37 (30%) represented the teacher's initiation of a topic.

The teacher's questions can be classified both by function and content--a predominant number of her questions are opinion and information requests, and these can be divided into questions about Personal and Academic topics. There are also two performatives in her questions--directives and requests for clarification, both of which request action on the student's part. Her use of a question form for directives softens the imperative force of a directive and encourages a reasonable response. Instead of "Don't be late on Monday," the teacher will write to a chronically late student:

> You were late again. What happens every Monday? You are either absent or late every Monday.

One particular type of question --the reflective question--emerges as having central importance for the metacognitive function of the journal. The teacher's reflective questions pull the student's thinking from a focus on the specific situation to a more general concept, which is potentially available in the specific here and now. She 'calls for reflection,' for a process of thinking over ways of handling a problem. Kreeft finds that the reflective question is a common option in response to complaints, focusing the student on alternative ways of handling a situation.

Questions in the journals occur in a context of freedom. Rather than maintaining status, age, and power asymmetry, the teacher uses questions to reduce the asymmetry. She does this by following in her questioning what others (Lakoff, 1973) have suggested are the rules for social politeness in conversation: they are friendly, non-imposing, and offer options.

In so doing, even the 'simple' commonplace question contributes toward equalizing the human relationship between student and teacher. Her implicit rules for questioning "allow students to come out from under an umbrella of control and begin to relate to an adult as independently thinking and acting individuals." (Kreeft, "Why Ask?...", in this report)

3. Analysis of Complaining in Dialogue Journals

When the students were asked individually to select the most important uses of the journal, 25 of 26 chose complaining. The teacher stresses the value of the journals for 'complaining' when she talks with her classes initially about what it means to communicate in this mode. Complaining is one of the negative language functions which our culture seldom allows children to practice. The right to complain is generally granted only to adults and is circumscribed even then. Shuy points out in his paper that complaints, like other speech acts, have conditions for being "felicitous"—that is, for being effective in achieving the desired result. A felicitous complaint must be sincere, it must offer new information (a complaint has no point if the speaker or writer believes that the hearer or reader already knows what has happened), and, most crucial, a felicitous complaint must give evidence for the truth of the event or action or state complained about.

Complaints are of crucial importance in relationships because the right to complain presupposes that one does have rights which may have been violated or affected by some injustice. Being allowed to complain in the dialogue journals is, therefore, a sign of enfranchisement as persons. Students have a say about things, in a powerful way. The importance of complaints, in our view, is that they provide the opportunity to learn and practice the rational structure of the felicity conditions for successful complaining. Only active engagement in the act of complaining and in reading the teacher's responses can teach this.

Shuy's analysis describes how a sample of six students learn to complain competently, or "felicitously," across the school year. In contrast to the other functional analyses (Shuy's analysis of several language functions and Kreeft's analysis of questions), this study involves a discourse-level language function in which the focus is on the discourse structure. He analyzes 365 complaints made by the six students, in terms of three of the four felicity conditions suggested by Searle (1969):

1. informativeness
2. statement of prejudice
3. evidence that the complaint is true.

Shuy finds wide variation among individual students in their ability to offer felicitous complaints and even great within-student variation across the domains of academic, interpersonal, and individual or personal topics. Not surprisingly, most of the students were far better at complaining about interpersonal injustice than at complaining about academic events. The overall number of all complaints decreases by 1/3 from the fall (Sept. - Dec.) to the spring (April - June) periods, but the felicity of student complaints doubles from 31% to 62%

Shuy stresses the genuine pedagogical value for effective writing and reasoning skills of allowing students to complain in this interactive written form: real complaints are based on real, strongly felt experiences, which involve conflict, differing points of view, the need to give an account and offer new information as evidence for the truth of what one asserts. Good real-life writing is motivated by just such conditions, and clear, rational thinking involves the ability to give reasons, to argue from evidence, to provide new information in order to convince or persuade. Complaining appears to be an excellent means of encouraging coherent discourse.

Early in our research, we were puzzled by the evident encouragement of complaining by this teacher; in our heads, we still heard parents and teachers telling us, "don't complain." We are no longer puzzled and see, in the transition from no complaining or infelicitous complaints to fully competent ones, the growth of cognitive abilities, an actualization of the goal of education. If the right to complain is granted political status as one of the first 10 Amendments to the U.S. Constitution (the right to redress of grievances), it would seem worth including in the educational process as well.

D. Interaction and Mutual Cooperation in Dialogue Journal Writing

The third distinctive feature of dialogue journal writing, in contrast to in-school writing, is perhaps the one that most sets it apart. At least some of the students' in-class writing probably involves writing about topics they have chosen, in some functional kinds of communication--such as letter-writing--to real audiences. The essence of dialogue writing, however, is that it is jointly accomplished by two participants, with the teacher becoming fully engaged in writing back. The papers in this section address this interactive characteristic of the writing, exploring its significance for the development of mutuality between teacher and students and the educational implications of the mutual relationship that is created.

1. Topic Continuation: Dialogue Writing as a Bridge to Unassisted Writing

If we view the dialogue journals as a series of interactional turns between the two writers, an interesting feature is that some topics are continued in the discussion over several turns, while others are not. The teacher allows the students to determine which topics are continued; she rarely recycles a topic if a student has not responded to her last comment. Therefore, whether topics are continued beyond a single turn is determined both by the student's interest in and motivation to discuss that topic and by the student's ability to add new information, to elaborate on the topic in a new turn.

The choice of topic continuation as a focus for study exemplifies how we were guided by the perspectives of the participants themselves in our selection of areas of analysis, even in areas that might be thought of as 'purely' linguistic attributes of the dialogue. It was clear early on that extended conversations are marked events for both the teacher and the students; in retrospective interviews, they spontaneously recalled the problems or concerns about which they "wrote for a long time" (observation made by one of the students), "when it went on for days and days" (a student), or when "it seemed like we wrote about that sweater [lost] for a whole month!" (teacher). These comments indicated to us that topic continuation across turns--a basic structural feature of the dialogue journal--was a meaningful attribute for participants, one to which they paid attention and which they remembered.

In Kreeft's study of some aspects of topic continuation, she draws an analogy between topic continuation in dialogue journal writing and the interactive, audience assisted nature of school "sharing time," in which children initially learn to give short speeches (oral monologues) with the help of the teacher's prompting, as needed, as preparation for the "literate" skill of presenting information unassisted by the interactive framework (Michaels and Cook-Gumperz, 1979). She also views the continuous journal dialogues as being much like the "mutually negotiated construction of a world through face-to-face interaction," of such traditional oral cultures as the Athabaskan Indians studied by the Scollons (1979). Through the written interaction about student-chosen topics that occurs in the journals, students learn, over time, to construct written material unassisted.

Kreeft defined a 'continued topic' as those instances in which the student writes about a particular topic for more than one turn, with or without an intervening teacher comment. All students in the sample studied (10 students, for two weeks in the fall and two weeks in the spring) showed a marked growth during the year in the ability to carry out a continued discourse across the turns of the daily entries. Twice as many student-initiated topics were continued by the students in the spring (27%) as in the fall. The topics continued in the spring extended for many more turns than those continued in the fall, so that the average number of turns per continued conversation for this sample increased from 3.5 in the fall to 4.37 in the spring.

The predominant domain for continued topics shifted from academic and class subjects in the fall, to individual, personal ones in the spring.

The growth of shared understanding throughout the year contributes to the general growth of student-initiated topics in the personal domain, topics in this domain are ones about which the teacher knows less and the student more, leading the students to have 'more to say.' Thus, our finding that students' desire and ability to continue topics increases as the year progresses is in part explained by this shift toward topics about which the student has more knowledge than the teacher, and thus a greater sense of the need to explain, to describe, and to extend a discussion beyond one or two turns.

The topic continuation analysis therefore provides additional support for our general observation that what happens in the year-long dialogue is the development of personal themes--a 'thematization' which reflects the articulation of each student's personal perspective.

In continuing topics across the turns of each day's entries, the students and teacher use strategies common in oral discourse. Strategies such as these would not be available to the beginning writer in an expository essay, and Kreeft shows how their use here facilitates the extension of student writing. Among the common strategies for extending student entries are repetition of key words in the comment of the other writer--a kind of 'tying' or 'latching on,' mutual sequential narrowing of the topic to focus on important aspects with specific here-and-now referents, and use of questions to advance the discussions.

Kreeft shows graphically how the teacher, by engaging the student in interactive topic continuation, "builds on the student's writing to push for further thinking and gradually prepares the student for engaging, unaided, in the same thought processes," of reflecting, comparing, and generalizing (Kreeft, "Topic Continuation"). The concern that dialogue writing might become an end in itself, or even a barrier to the development of unassisted writing, fades into irrelevance as we watch students blossom in their ability to express themselves.

2. Mutuality-Building Conversations: Written Dialogue as a Basis for Student-Teacher Rapport

"Mutual conversations" are those instances in the dialogue writing which transcend the often asymmetrical topic-comment structure in which one participant introduces a topic, the other comments, and the discussion ends for the moment. In mutual conversations, a student and the teacher find or jointly construct a topic of such importance that both can contribute new information about it, and they can converse as equals for an extended series of turns. In such instances, the roles of 'student' and 'teacher' are set aside and other roles are taken: those of two L.A. Dodger fans, two scientific experimenters, or of vacationers who have both visited Sea World in San Diego.

Mutual conversations are evidence for the development of a more symmetrical relationship between student and teacher as students acquire and use the power to direct and extend a conversation in writing. As a result, they allow individualized, personal relationships, beyond classroom concerns. One student, in an interview with Staton, observed this growth of a relationship:

> In the beginning she [the teacher] didn't really know us that well so when she first wrote to us she wrote to us like she wrote to everyone, but now she's writing to us like an individual person. I can look back in the first journal and I can see that she writes, "Today was a good day" and "You'll get to know your class better" or something like that. And then here I read something like...well, just personal things. I think it has to do with the way that I write.

This study of mutuality in the journals draws on the notion of intersubjectivity as the basis for human language. Intersubjectivity is usually defined as the agreement in forms of life, in psychological or subjective mental representations of the intentions and ideas of others which come from our common knowledge of what it is to be human (Wittgenstein, 1953, Rommetveit, 1974, Trevarthen, 1980). Intersubjectivity, in this view, is necessary for any human conversation to occur, including the first, pre-verbal conversations of infants and care-takers (Trevarthen, 1980). But human dialogue also leads to an increase in shared understanding, in shared ways to organize the stream of experience and events into meaningful patterns. These mutual conversations are both products of the process of developing the trust and understanding which the dialogue journals create, and the foundations on which new levels of interpersonal understanding, about more difficult, still-disputed topics, can be attempted. To describe the development and structure of mutual conversations, Kreeft selected highly visible, concentrated instances in which different students and the teacher jointly continue and contribute to a sustained discussion of a single topic. These paradigm instances are the visible evidence of what is occurring throughout the year in most of the journals.[1]

In these mutual conversations, the normal classroom asymmetry of power and status in discourse is replaced by an equality of responsibility for initiating and sustaining the conversation. The students take on the adult's role of directing the conversation; the teacher takes on the student's role of contributing information of personal interest.

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[1] Our in-depth reading of some 15 of the 26 journals shows that only 3 or 4 journals lack evidence of substantial development of mutual understanding; an estimate which accords with Mrs. R's perception of this year's class.

Kreeft's analysis of a science experiment conversation in one student's journal traces how the student engages the teacher in a search for a topic they can both talk about. The student first writes:

> Mrs. R, Have you noticed we haven't really been having anything so find a subject you would like to talk about and we will.

A mutual search results, in which topics are introduced by each but not accepted, until they find a mutual topic, a science experiment. This involves both student and teacher in actually carrying out the same experiment at home so they can compare results. This science experiment conversation displays all of the distinctive features of an ideal mutual conversation: mutual decision to discuss a particular topic; cohesion; provision of new information by both participants; use of personal address ("you"), demonstrating awareness of the other's perspective; and mutual use of questions to seek new information and extend the conversations.

In this conversation, there is a distinctive pattern of alternation by both participants between statements which function to affirm or seek assurance of mutuality and those which function to provide new information. The schematic chart (Figure 12) shows the skeleton of the conversation.

	Student (proposal)	Teacher (revision)
Initiation of Proposal	75 I would like you to think up something like rainwater and sugar	Okay! salt and water
Mutual Acceptance of Proposal	76 I am going to do that exsperient	Good! I'll do my experiment, too
Sharing of Information	77 I did my experient -All my water evaporated -I started making my record -The salt coming together	The water is evaporating Some salt crystals are growing
	* * * *	
	78 Where's your cup? I put mine in the kitchen	On the counter in the kitchen, too Did you find the measure of water? My crystals are growing. Are yours?
	* * * *	
	79 1/2 cup of water If you can bring yours tomorrow...	I'll bring it on Monday.
	* * * *	
	80 OK, I'll bring mine.	I will try to remember my salt crystals, too.
	* * * *	
	81 Your experient looks like mine...	Look at the crystals through a microscope? What would you see?
	* * * *	
	82 I do think that would be nice. I don't know what I'll see.	I'll get a magnifying glass. Why do crystals grow?
	* * * *	
	83 The crystals evaporate, the salt goes up with it.	
Conclusion	84 I spilled the exsperient	Oh dear!!

—— = giving and seeking information
〰〰 = building mutuality

Figure 12: The Science Experiment

The mutual conversations demonstrate the extraordinary *collaborativeness* of the dialogue journals. such extended discussions emerge out of many briefer, "lead-chorus" type discussions, in which the teacher acknowledges, supports, and continues a student-initiated topic. Kreeft finds that both participants *share* in giving new relevant information, both participants are able to monitor and ensure the topic is sustained, and each contribution to the dialogue builds on the previous contribution of the other writer.

These mutual conversations, generally about nonschool or class events, are high points of the individual journals. Student and teacher both drop for a moment their customary roles. Through searching for and finding a mutually interesting topic, they are able to talk directly as friends do.

Mutual conversations are clear evidence of the 'co-membership' status of student and teacher in the journals. Fred Erickson has found that participants in a conversation experience greater intimacy and sense of being understood when they share co-membership in some social grouping such as ethnicity (Erickson, et al., 1973; Erickson and Schultz, 1981). In the dialogue journals, we are able to observe through these mutual conversations that the experience of discussing how and why things happen--why the Dodgers lost (or won), what I like to do, or a trip to Sea World--in itself *creates* co-membership.

Instead of a cultural-sociological foundation for co-membership or 'mutuality,'

Co-membership (ethnic, social, peer age) ⟶ Friendly discussion of mutual topic the journals establish a foundation through the created opportunity to find and discuss mutually interesting topics.

Diversity (of age, ethnicity, status) ⟶ Friendly mutual conversation ⟶ Mutuality, experience of co-membership

Our decision to study intensively how mutual conversations are jointly established and maintained came from a view of language as human interaction with an inherent power to create mutual understanding.

> Once the other person accepts the invitation to engage in the dialogue, [his or her] life situation is temporarily transformed...From that moment on, [both participants] become inhabitants of a partially shared social reality, established and continuously modified by their acts of communication.
>
> (Rommetveit, 1974, p. 22)

Communication between persons through language is made possible by the existence of 'agreement in forms of life' which are the foundation of linguistic symbols--whether words or signs. The intersubjectivity of human understanding is a given for communication to take place at all, but greater understanding is always the potential product of human dialogue, as two participants bring their separate worlds into interaction in dialogue, and together increase the overlap in their ways of categorizing the world.

The mutual conversations represent paradigm cases of what occurs in more fleeting ways in every interaction in the journal dialogues. the creation of greater understanding between two persons. We consider the balance in the journals between mutuality-building conversations, on the one hand, and discussions of problems, complaints, or disputable events, on the other, to be the key to understanding how the dialogic interaction works to create, maintain, and develop the relationship between the teacher and her students. Mutual cooperation and honest dispute are *both* necessary, in the larger view, for the development of greater intersubjectivity in which individual perspectives can be respected and understood and a mutual perspective on experience can at times be accomplished.

E. Writing as Thinking and Reasoning

A fourth attribute of the dialogue writing is the use of the journal to discuss problems, puzzling events, and actions, and to reason about them together. We have made a beginning toward knowing how to analyze and describe this aspect of dialogue journal writing in the papers by Jana Staton on the discussion of problems and on the development of student understanding of a topic and on topic-specific elaboration. In each of these studies, the focus is on the structure of reasoning or thinking in an interactional framework. The analyses of the linguistic features of the writing here focus on what the features can tell us about the students' thinking. Are students just describing events or consciously reflecting on what happened and why things happpen? Are students initiating discussions of probems or is the teacher? Do students respond to her presentation of a different point of view about a conflict situation and its causes (T: "I didn't see Dino hit you, but I did see you hit Dino. Was there anything else you could have done?"), continuing the discussion in order to seek a mutual understanding of what happened?

All of these papers draw on the concept that human cognitive development is interactively assisted and 'led' by instruction through social dialogue between the learner and an adult or more experienced peer. This concept comes from the work of the Soviet psychologist Vygotsky (1934/62, 1978) and his colleagues and followers (Luria, 1976; Leon'tev, 1981; cf. Cole, 1978; Wertsch, in press). In their view the development of explicitly "human" higher-order cognitive abilities (variously referred to by such terms as consciousness, reasoning, metacognition) is brought about by an adult sharing a task with a child in a joint enterprise. The adult assists or 'scaffolds' the child's actions, at first completing the task for the child and gradually reducing the level and kind of intervention as the child catches on. The child first acquires an understanding of the goal, as a consequence of engaging in it several times, and then internalizes the verbal strategies for initiating, monitoring and directing the particular activities to achieve the goal, and can thus carry it out on her own.

> An interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal one....Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later on, on the individual level....All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57)

This view of development also rests on the notion that "higher functions" are language-based, and that conscious thinking comes from the internalization of overt action, and as the child grows older, the internalization of external, social dialogue.

Linked to this concept is Vygotsky's idea that learning occurs in the child's "zone of proximal development," which he defined as the difference between what the child could do independently and what she could accomplish with assistance.

> The zone of proximal development defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation...(p. 86) We propose that an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development, that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that

> are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90)

We should point out that we, like Vygotsky, are referring to the internalization of consciously-mediated cognitive functions and constructs, in relation to goal-directed activities such as making friends or doing well in spelling, not the imitative practice of lower order physical operations such as raising one's hand appropriately or memorizing spelling rules. (Griffin, Newman and Cole, 1981, Wertsch, in press).

In the journals, we are able to observe the students' initial, 'unassisted' attempts to reason about an event or problem, such as how to move up in math or how to get along with others and not fight. The interaction between the teacher and student, as an opportunity to observe how the teacher responds to what she perceives as the child's level of functioning and potential range of development (the zone of proximal development), adapting her intervention to appropriate these initial strategies and incorporate them into a more effective way of reasoning about the problem (Griffin, Newman and Cole, 1981). Whether the student incorporates some of the teacher's concepts of the task and strategies for thinking about a problem, the teacher's strategies also change, to allow the student to gradually take over the task.

Early in the year, for example, the teacher provides elaborated descriptions of events in response to brief (and infelicitous) complaints which show a relatively immature approach to a 'problem event.'

S	T
Gordon: At PE I don't think your to fair. (18-S)	Teacher: You were throwing the ball too hard. From now on when we have socco, I may have to keep you in. You are big and strong, but that doesn't mean smaller and weaker people should suffer. (18-T)

Later in the year, the same student appears to have internalized the ability to describe and reflect on his conflicts with others, and the teacher's response provides confirmation and encouragement.

S	T
Gordon: Mrs. C___ makes me sick. Today wasn't one of my best days. It was my very worst. I can't believe this. From now on I am staying in at recess and at lunch. Because I cannot really have a good day when I go out there. So I have finally made up my mind. Math was pretty good for me today. I liked the Confucius Say puzzle. But both of them were fun. I like it when we do puzzles like that in math class. It's working, but having fun at the same time. I am glad that I was kinda good in math today. It really makes me happy. (95-S)	Teacher: Such a lot of good thinking! It is your choice to stay in, and you know it is okay with me. Using your time to the best advantage for you is pretty smart. Good! Puzzles are fun. You were the first one done today. I wasn't sure if it was because you were interested or because you were just trying very hard. We do need to practice in math and using puzzles helps. (95-T)

1. Discussion of Problems in Dialogue Journals

The increasing mutuality between student and teachers provides an essential foundation of trust and shared understanding out of which students (and the teacher) can risk bringing up problems for discussion. Staton analyzes how problem discussions emerge out of complaints, pro forma apologies, and emotional outbursts and become more rational and mutually resolved discussions.

Staton finds that what gets 'solved' for most students in the journals are not the daily conflicts and problems with other students, but the problem of being able to initiate and discuss a problem with another person at all. The teacher is able to act as a counselor and assist students in first learning to communicate about their own feelings, perceptions, values and beliefs. She then attempts to provide a different perspective on the problem event, often by just describing it from her point of view. As students learn to take on this initial step of providing more detailed descriptions, the teacher can begin to suggest alternative solutions, and to press for the student to become more aware of his or her own responsibility in determining the outcome.

The analysis of problem discussions in the journals examines how one student, "Tai," changes in her approach to initiating and discussing problems with other peers and with teachers, as a result of the 'interactional scaffolding' provided by the teacher. This analysis provides an extended, discourse-level description across an entire year's dialogue. The study also describes how the teacher at first takes on the task of discussing a dispute or conflict for the student, gradually relinquishing this task as the student becomes more willing and able to do so without assistance. The teacher then moves into a more reflective, evaluative level of reasoning, suggesting alternative choices, and asking the student to decide 'why' conflicts happen and what actions she can take to avoid them.

The intensive analysis of Tai and the teacher's discussions about her conflicts with peers and teachers shows that Tai begins by avoiding discussion of her problems, she generally makes a minimal reference to an event, apologizes without elaboration or does not bring it up at all. The teacher's responses complete the tasks of initiating, describing and identifying the cause of the problem. In the early entries, the teacher is 'solving' the probem of how to communicate about problems.

Staton's analysis shows that Tai incorporates the teacher's strategy by spring, initiating the discussion of a problem and giving more elaborated descriptions of how she perceived the event. The teacher then, by reflective questions ("What can you do when you feel so angry") and suggestions of alternative choices, begins guiding Tai in the task of reflecting on events and evaluating her choices.

The changes in Tai's strategies are significant, as represented by her language functions for discussing the most serious problem events. In the fall, she uses non-engagement strategies (avoidance, pro forma apologies) 57% of the time in dealing with serious events (being excluded from class or school, fighting, etc.). In the spring, non-engagement and mininal referencing have almost disappeared, and Tai has incorporated (and uses independently) the teacher's strategies of describing events in detail, expressing feelings, and reflecting/ evaluating them.

Table 2 - Student Strategies Used in Discussing Serious Problem Events, Tai's Dialogue Journal.

	Fall		Spring	
Strategies	N	% of Total Serious Events (N=14)	N	% of Total Serious Events (N=10)
Non-engagement	8	57%	0	0
Minimal reference	5	36%	2	20%
Describing	4	29%	7	70%
Expressing feelings	2	14%	8	80%
Reflecting	1	7%	6	60%

Note: Percents total more than 100, since over several turns in a discussion about a single event, more than one strategy may be used.

Staton chose the teacher's questions as language actions indicating the teacher's intention to adapt her responses to match Tai's initial level of reasoning and to gradually advance the level of reasoning in the dialogue as the student becomes engaged in this 'scaffolded' process.

The teacher's questions in the first 13 interactions are dominated by directives--requests for specific actions (75%). In the next phase (interactions 14-20), the questions are predominately information seeking, or requests for descriptions. At the end, her questions are largely requests for Tai to reflect on actions (67%).

By intensively studying the interactive discourse between one student and teacher across an extended period of time, the larger patterns of developing mutuality and exploration of new ways to think about oneself and the world can be seen. This paper thus provides validation of conclusions drawn from crosssectional analyses on language functions, questions and topic continuation by Shuy and Kreeft.

2. The Development of Topic Understanding

The dialogue between Gordon and the teacher about math has already been discussed as one of the papers contributing to our understanding of how topics develop and change as a result of extended, written dialogue interaction. The bulk of this paper, however, involves a description of the changes that occur in the student's attitudes toward and assumptions or constructs about math and his math class behavior. In particular, Staton pursued two questions: What are the teacher's strategies for advancing the student's reasoning through the dialogue interaction? What evidence is there that the obvious changes in Gordon's thinking are connected to the teacher's strategies and not simply "maturational"?

In studying Gordon's interactions with the teacher in math, it is apparent that he is developing an awareness of himself, of the relationship between his actions and outcomes, and of math as a complex, differentiated concept with many specific aspects. Staton describes the nature of these changes by looking at how he linguistically represents his knowledge of the world. She then describes how the interaction with the teacher contributes to and shapes how he represents his experiences.

In this individual profile, we find that Gordon changes from non-specific to more specific, detailed comments, explicitely referencing his actions and the content of math. By spring he has begun to connect his understanding of the principles the teacher has been suggesting, such as "learning is fun if you really understand it," to his own experience.

Gordon's changes illustrate how 'knowledge' of a concept or general principle is acquired. The teacher seizes on his interest in math as a framework for introducing some general propositions about learning and understanding an academic subject. She does so only in relation to specific here and now experiences so that Gordon can connect these generalizations to concrete events and understand its meaning. As Mishler (1979) has observed, human action and experience are always context dependent and can only be understood within their contexts. Gordon is finding and articulating the relationship between some useful rules about that part of human experience called learning, and his very own concrete, lived experience.

At the start of the year, most of Gordon's comments are non-specific, often in an existential form: "Math is...." He makes no explicit references to the specifics of math, or to his own actions in math. He offers the teacher little new information but daily repeats his liking for math and his hopes of moving up. Not only is his writing non-elaborated, but his basic beliefs and concepts about learning and his own actions are not effective ones for mastering math. His initial beliefs are in the order of "all new things are hard." By spring there is not only a shift toward being more elaborative about the topic of math, but he also describes his own actions and feelings.

The following table shows the shift in Gordon's elaboration about math across the year, divided into 3 month segments.

Table 3 - Shift in Student Elaboration in Dialogue on Math, from Gordon's Dialogue Journal

	Non-Elaborated	Isolated General Principle	Specific Details	Fully Elaborated
Fall	58%	9%	24%	9%
Winter	44%	24%	15%	18%
Spring	23%	6%	61%	10%

In the fall, the proportion of non-elaborated comments is very high--58%. The number of comments giving specific or fully-elaborated information on this topic are few--24% and 9%. By spring, there is a marked change in his elaboration: only 23% of his statements fall into the non-elaborated category, 61% offer specific details. Gordon still does not make many fully-elaborated statements, and that remains a major role for the teacher in her responses. This kind of interactive, functional writing is seen as placing an active demand on the student to construct and elaborate the meaning of events in order to communicate effectively and continue the dialogue.

In the year-long dialogue on math, the teacher builds on Gordon's assertions which initially consist of "I like math" and "I should be moving up soon" as the mutual basis for her own propositions, which have to do with the nature of learning and understanding: "If you work hard and listen, you will do well" and "Understanding math is the key to its being fun." Gordon has a lot of difficulty with this second basic proposition, and we can trace his efforts to 'work through' and assimilate her belief that learning is fun during the course of the year. Learning and fun are at first separate concepts. Then, in March, he juxtaposes them, saying, "Math was fun today, but it's not like I didn't learn anything," or "It's working, but having fun at the same time." Finally, in April, he has not just internalized the concept but can use it independently to characterize his experience: "It's a mixture of learning and fun, and I like that kind of stuff."

In this paper, Staton describes how the initial topic of math changes through the process of interactive discourse to encompass more reflective generalizations about learning and understanding at a higher level of thinking, which philosophers of human behavior variously describe as 'second-order' thinking, evaluative thought, or reflective abstraction about events, actions, and relationships (Alston, 1977; Harre and Secord, 1972; Taylor, 1977; Piaget, 1978).

The paper shows how the teacher appropriates a topic of significant concern to the student as a focus for introducing important concepts, principles of human action, and beliefs which she believes will provide a more effective, flexible system.

Finally, the paper demonstrates the essential freedom enjoyed by the student in this interactive tutorial process. The student's volition to become engaged in and continue the dialogue about a particular topic is a necessary condition for the teacher's guided assistance to be effective.

3. The Development of Topic-Specific Elaboration

The paper on topic elaboration by Jana Staton, begins with a focus on the text from the perspective of written discourse, to determine if the students become more or less 'elaborative' on topics of interest to them as they become accustomed to dialogue writing. The research on oral and written language is beginning to come to a consensus that the observable differences between oral and written discourse are largely caused by the differing demands of the usual contexts, topics, purposes and audiences for which we use writing and speaking (Tannen, in press, Nystrand, in press), rather than being inherent in the process of writing or speaking itself. Because the dialogue journals do share many characteristics of oral conversation--known audience, shared events and references, lack of evaluation by hearer of forms--an explanation of whether the writing itself retains or facilitates characteristics traditionally thought to be characteristic of written text seemed to be a fruitful task.

The first question was whether writing in a shared context, about partially shared events, led students toward less elaboration or whether they chose to use this opportunity to develop topics for discussion by written-entry, topic specific elaboration. A trend toward greater elaboration was found when a 1-week sample of fall and spring journal entries from all students were compared. The most interesting aspect of this finding was that the boys, as a group, changed markedly, from little elaboration in the fall toward a very high frequency of topic-specific elaboration in the spring.

Table 4 - Comparison of Male and Female Elaboration and Topic Focus - 25 Students

	N of Students		Avg. No. Topics Intro./Week		Elaboration		Avg. Elaboration Increase of Students Increasing	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Fall	11	14	23	17	31.3	37.3	29.5%	11%
Spring	11	14	18	16	59.8	30.6		

Had there been an equal number of boys and girls in the class, the entire class average for elaboration would most likely have increased significantly, instead of showing only a slight upward turn by spring.

This analysis is more concerned, however, with what can be learned about the qualititive structure of elaboration. The students' elaborations occur in order to accomplish a communicative purpose. The data show that when students elaborate, they begin to go beyond adding more specific details to make comparisons or contrasts, and sometimes, to make explicit a general principle or concept. This analysis draws on Odell's earlier study of intellectual process "as a way of understanding growth in writing" (Odell, 1977) and contrasts the students' writing with the teacher's model of discourse.

As the table on the next page shows, Staton found that students go beyond giving details in 24 percent of all their elaborated comments to make a comparison or contrast or to classify the event or action. The teacher, in contrast, includes a contrast, classification or general principle in 47% of her elaborations.

The analysis suggests that elaboration in writing can be studied as a natural process of constructing a more complete comment on a topic when the writer is in a functional, communicative context. This view sees the writer involved in a number of decisions once a topic has been chosen: whether to add details, to give more new, relevant information beyond the initial comment; whether to add a comparison or to classify the topic-event; whether to make explicit the meaning, the reason for discussing it at all. We would not claim that such decision-making is always a conscious, deliberate action for most of the students, although it well may be for the teacher. But the structure of elaboration presupposes that the writer has made choices about how much of what he/she has experienced to make explicit in what is said, and how much to leave unstated.

In the dialogue journals, elaboration is not required or elicited by teacher-prepared goals (such as asking students to "write two pages"). However, the dialogue writing provides students, who may have begun the year quite unaware of the needs of an audience for specific information

	Elaboration as Percent of all Comments		Percent of all Elaborated Comments with Particular Features					
			Only Details		+Contrast/Classification		+Explicit Principle	
	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher
Fall	35	49	73	52	22	15	4.0	32
Spring	41	50	66	46	26	32	6.8	21
Total	38	50	70	49	25	24	5.4	26

Table 5. Comparison of the Frequency and Structure of Elaboration, Teacher and Student (in Percents)

and explicit articulation of values, beliefs, feelings, personal opinions, with repeated modeling by the teacher of competent communication on topics they have initiated and with repeated questions from the teacher for more elaboration. Thus students have the opportunity to gradually learn the strategies for elaboration, including making explicit their personal point of view.

This conclusion is supported by the sophisticated understanding of one student, Tai, when asked why she wrote more than three sentences when she didn't "have to." She replied,

> Cause--it's more like everything you write is just not gonna come down in one little sentence or something. It's like every time you want to write about something you have to write a whole big paragraph, because it's so much to tell about about what happened, for her to know what you're talking about, because if you don't do it like that, and you're lazy or something, then she'll have to keep writing back and forth about the same idea until she really gets what you're talking about.
>
> Like I wrote two or three pages because this girl was getting on my nerves and I can't remember who it was, but I had got in trouble for something and I just told her, you know, what it was.

The tentative conclusions from this initial look at topic elaboration are: (1) that dialogue journal writing does not diminish the opportunities for students to become more elaborative in their writing, and (2) for those students who may be least likely to elaborate voluntarily, this teacher-assisted writing can lead to a marked increase in elaboration during a relatively brief period (5 months). The alternative possibility that a conversational style and shared context for writing would lead to increasingly "telegraphic" writing, more dependent on knowledge of context to be comprehensible for the reader, is not supported by our data.

One more important general conclusion suggested by this analysis may be that a majority of the students will not change to any significant degree on any particular single dimension of their writing in dialogue journals. Thus, traditional statistical approaches to measuring outcomes, such as testing for significant differences between group means, are inappropriate for assessing the effects of this kind of individualized interaction. Assessment of specific 'outcomes' will need to be based on the individual needs each student evidences in his or her writing in the fall, rather than on a class-wide average.

F. The Forms of Writing

One paper addresses an aspect of the dialogue journals more closely identified with writing--spelling. As part of this section, we will also review two exploratory efforts by independent researchers which compare the dialogue journal writing with in-class assignments.

As can be seen from the studies already reviewed, our focus has been predominately on how this communicative event is constructed and maintained, not on how the written text might be analyzed from the traditional concerns of composition research--such as paragraph organization, grammatical errors or spelling errors. Our framework of communicative competence places high priority on other aspects of the writing--the writers' purposes and intentions, the interactional synchrony achieved or not achieved, change in the interactional patterns and content of topics over time. These priorities were dictated by our need to understand this event in its own right. We found that direct comparisons of interactive writing with teacher-directed writing which has already-prepared goals ("Tell a story," "Describe the trip you took," "Write a 3-paragraph essay about _______.")

were difficult at this point in our research because of intrinsically different goals. However, the two exploratory efforts did explore the problem of how we might go about doing such research.

1. Spelling in the Dialogue Journal Writing

In the paper on spelling by Roger Shuy, attention is paid to the forms of student language. For many parents, childen, and some teachers, writing is spelling. College students, when asked to explain why they believe they are 'poor writers,' often say, "I can't spell." Although we do not believe spelling and writing can be equated, it is true that students who have difficulty with spelling will avoid writing tasks, and may never get the practice needed to be good writers. Both self-imposed and external penalties for spelling errors in a literate culture are severe. And so, although we did not conduct other analyses of the forms of language, we were curious about the question of spelling. The teacher stresses that she never corrects the dialogue journal writing, instead, she tries to use their misspelled words correctly in her responses. In a situation in which spelling errors are not overtly corrected and attention is focused on function, not form, won't students write with less attention to their spelling and make progressively more errors? These are the questions that led us to examine more closely the spelling in the journals of a 10-student sample, and contrast their performance in the fall and spring with their official spelling test record.

Shuy first classifies the kinds of spelling errors which occur in the students' writing, and finds four kinds: orthographically influenced, phonologically influenced, grammatically influenced, and lexically influenced. He points out that each kind reflects a different stage in the acquisition of spelling and would imply a different teaching strategy for remediation. Among the values of the dialogue journals is that they provide us, as researchers and teachers, with an extended sample of natural writing produced under conditions of low anxiety about formal corrections.

If one wanted to conduct a large scale assessment of naturally occurring spelling problems in functional use, one would do no better than to study this kind of writing. From it, as Shuy demonstrates, we can learn much about what spelling problems do exist, and whether they reflect a higher level of development toward good spelling.

An analysis of the frequency of spelling errors shows that of the 10 students, 6 improved from fall to spring, 2 did not change, and 2 showed an increase in errors. The two who increased in frequency of spelling errors, however, were already 'good spellers' in both the fall and spring. In contrast, on their spelling tests only 1 student improved across fall, winter, and spring periods, 2 did worse, and 6 stayed the same (1 student's spelling tests were not included in his cumulative folder).

As a group, the students' average for the entire year in the 'natural event' learning situation of the dialogue journals was markedly better than their spelling test averages (94.7% in journals vs. 86.1% on spelling tests). The least able spellers in the class improved greatly in their dialogue journals, where their attention was focused on accomplishing communicative functions, while on their spelling tests these poor spellers stayed in the last place The dialogue journal as this teacher practices its use appears to provide a natural learning environment for the improvement of spelling. We have noted earlier that she does try to use correctly in her responses words that a student has misspelled. Several students mentioned this in their interviews:

> Well, sometimes I spell things wrong and then I see that she does it the right way, and then I write it [correctly].
>
> Annette
> Spring interview

However, she does not correct all errors, for that would require an artificial kind of mirror-writing. The factors causing improvement are multiple and include, in addition to observing the teacher's correct modeling, the focus of attention on larger functional uses of the writing (which in all language acquisition practice situations appears to improve language forms; cf. Corsetti, 1979; Krashen, 1978; Stevick, 1980) and an increase in conscious awareness of the communicative effect of one's writing which may occur only when anxiety about external evaluation is minimized.

Our original question was whether spelling 'got worse' in the journals if no overt teacher correction occurs. Our findings are rather clear; most students improve in their mastery of spelling in the functional, natural event of dialogue journal writing. More important, they have learned that writing is not the same as spelling, that communicative competence in writing requires far more than good spelling, and that writing is fun and personally valuable even if one has difficulty in spelling words correctly. Perhaps with such attitudes, they will decide that the effort needed to master correct spelling is also of value in increasing the clarity, acceptability and impact of what they write.

2. Exploratory Efforts in Comparing Dialogue Journal Writing to Regular Writing Assignments

These two studies were undertaken independently by two graduate students in Sociolinguistics at Georgetown University using some of the Dialogue Journal Project's data base. Each attempts to describe the dialogue journal writing in relation to regular in-class writing assignments. Although not included with our research papers, these two studies are an important contribution to our understanding of the journal writing, and are therefore summarized here. These papers help balance our intense focus on *just* the dialogue journal writing, which might lead to an impression that the journals were the only major writing activity for these students. In fact, Picus, in studying the students' cumulative work folders, finds that the students in Room 11 completed 45 writing assignments during the year more than one writing assignment per week, including a wide range of creative writing tasks, thank you letters to performers who had visited the school, research outlines and reports on social studies topics, narratives of field trips, and so on, usually as part of some academic work or subject.

Reader Evaluation of Students' Written Discourse.

In the first study, Robby Morroy selected a sample from a student's journal and an in-class essay by the same student in order to study subjective reader responses to both kinds of writing. From the journal of Jay, a student with only minimal writing ability for his grade level, Morroy selected an elaborated discussion of a trip to San Diego for comparison with an essay describing the monsoon winds, written by the same student at approximately the same time of the year.

Teachers and a panel of graduate students were given the pair of texts to evaluate; the teachers were asked to 'grade' the essay and all readers were asked to respond to the texts by agreeing with a checklist of subjective reactions to the communicative and discourse properties of each text.

Morroy found that when both texts were judged according to the expectations of the essayist traditions for a particular kind of discourse form--organization, cohesiveness, and grammatical correctness--the in-class essay was rated higher. However, when the writing was judged on criteria of communicative competence--sincerity, interest to reader, and relevance--without the constraints of the essayist tradition, the journal text received more positive reactions from the judges.

It appears that the in-class essay conformed to both teacher's and the other readers' expectations, text analysis showed that it had more lexical cohesion (making it rather repetitive) and fewer difficulties in spelling and capitalization than the journal text.

In interviews the readers all said they liked the dialogue journal writing, giving as reasons that it showed "enthusiasm," that it was an "honest attempt to communicate something," and that the writer was "more involved in what he was talking about, more excited."

Morroy's study demonstrates the force of our conceptual framework of "good writing" in determining how the writing done in the dialogue journals is perceived and evaluated and may even help to explain why even the students did not think of their journals as "writing." His work is a basis for future research on the effects of different contexts and purposes on writing performance.

Teaching Children to Write

In the second study, Leah Picus also set out to compare the dialogue journal writing to other kinds of regular writing, but from the perspective of the teacher's role in writing instruction. Picus suggests a continuum of teacher assistance in accomplishing writing tasks. The interactive journal writing involves a high degree of assistance by the teacher through her responses. In the students' initial outlines of research reports, there is a moderate amount of feedback and comments from the teacher directed toward elaborating and expanding on the information. In their final reports, the students are expected to work independently and the teacher's role is an evaluative one, after the task is completed.

This teacher's mode of instruction along this continuum varies from implicit to explicit assistance. In the journals, she is teaching by implicit means--she models effective writing and she actively participates with the students in constructing accounts, exploring feelings, and describing what happened. She appropriates and completes student efforts, but does not direct them in how to write or what to write about. In formal in-class assignments, the teacher explicitely establishes the goals, the model of discourse form, and often the general or specific topic. We can imagine a model for comparing the various kinds of writing, including journal writing, along two dimensions as the following diagram shows, using various kinds of writing assignments:

(Intervention in completing task) -
('Scaffolding')

		high	moderate	low
	implicit	dialogue journal		
Instructional goal establishment				creative story
	explicit		outline	research report thank you letter

Picus draws on Vygotsky's and Bruner's conception of the educator as providing assistance and intervention to students in order for them to function independently. She suggests that dialogue journal writing does fit into a continuum of writing instruction, in which implicit but highly interactive writing provides a beginning point for functional practice in writing, while in-class writing involves much more explicit goals and directed tasks, but less opportunity for intervention and assistance during the process itself.

G. The Teacher's Perspective

> O the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, neither having to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them right out just as they are, chaff and grain alike; certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping and then with the breath of kindness, blow the rest away. (George Eliot, Middlemarch)

Our focus in this study has been on trying to understand the purposes, values, and meaning of the dialogue journals for the students who wrote them. In doing so, we have analyzed the teacher's writing largely in relation to the students' writing--their topics, complaints, questions, spelling difficulties. Another complete study could focus solely on the teacher's writing in the dialogue journals. The final paper of the study, included in the volume of Research papers, is a beginning on this effort, but instead of making the teacher a new subject for analysis, we decided to let her speak for herself. In the extended interviews with her during 1980 and 1981, she provided her own careful synthesis of her goals, concepts and strategies for using the dialogue journals as the core or "kernal" of her teaching. We felt that her own presentation gave us as researchers, and other teachers a far more effective understanding of how she does what she does than any explanation that we could attempt to give.

The paper on "The Teacher's Perspective" is just that--a transcript of the first interview with Mrs. R. about her goals and purposes in using the dialogue journals, with additional comments from a second interview a year later, about the benefits of using the journals for her as a teacher.

Her first interview begins with a description of how she works to establish a classroom community with clear rules for cooperative behavior. In the first six to eight weeks of school, the dialogue journals provide her with opportunities to explain and reinforce how things are done in Room 11, and to establish rapport with each student. In the journals, she is able to establish and reinforce routines for working and living together. As her students develop a sense of "community" and begin to take responsibility for the class as class officers, as playground team monitors, and in various group projects, the journals become a central means of mutually negotiating the daily life of the classroom. Her interview demonstrates the "embeddedness" of the dialogue journal in every aspect of clasroom life--from how to go up and down the stairs without confusion, to explaining her concepts about learning, to bringing up personal problems for discussion and resolution.

Mrs. R. gives us a comprehensive picture of how she sees her teaching year and then brings into the discussion the myriad ways in which the journals help her--in assessing what students need to know about writing conventions and spelling, and in bringing out problems with team captains and group leadership. As Mrs. R. puts it:

> When we have gotten over the need to define limits, the journals really help me to check on what is going on in the classroom. The journals help [the students] to complain or to ask for specific lessons or materials if they're working on a special project or their group needs something. They know that if they write it in their journals, I will do my best to supply those things for their next meeting. And then the journals are used for problem solving, whenever they have problems. Consequently, I think that they and I are becoming beter acquainted through the year. There's a lot of personal information we can exchange in the journals.

The ultimate goal of her dialogues with students in the journals is the development of independence and autonomy.

> By the end of the year I want them to feel that they are capable. They are going into junior high and I want them to have that feeling of assurance that they know what they are doing. I know that if I can send them out with a sense of knowing that they can handle their own situation, then if something goes wrong, they can do something about it.

Mrs. R's. focus on students' learning to solve their own problems runs throughout her discussion of her teaching and reflects her strong training in both child development theory and in Dewey's concept of education as directed toward developing students capable of self-directed, rational action.

In her discussion, Mrs. R. describes how the journals emerged as an alternative to individual student conferences, as a way to individualize her instruction in a self-contained classroom. In the excerpts from a second set of interviews (September, 1981), she goes on to describe the benefits to her as a teacher of this daily written encounter: the journals provide a means for learning about each child, sharing feelings and personal experiences, and for using student feedback as a basis for lesson planning, individual assessment, and for developing a deeper comprehension of values and a sensitivity to others.

Unlike the research papers, this paper does not have findings to be summarized. The information in this paper is inextricably bound up in the teacher's own unique, personal perspective which only her language can convey. We selected these interviews in order to allow others to encounter this teacher speaking for herself.

Her interview conveys effectively that the journals work because they are a means of communication which meet her needs as well as the needs of the students. They have allowed her, also, to experience the comfort of "feeling safe" with her students, by giving an opportunity for her to enter into a personal relationship with each one through dialogue. It is only through this kind of open dialogue, however it is achieved, that teachers and students alike are free to learn.

SECTION III. SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This study was intended to provide a greater understanding of the communicative event of dialogue journal writing, tentative conclusions about the meaning of our findings and generation of new research questions and hypotheses.

Section Two presented the results of our analyses of the dailogue journal as a communicative event from a variety of different perspectives. This last section provides a summary of the conclusions and implications to be drawn from the study as a whole for writing research and instruction and, more broadly, for teaching and learning.

A Macro-View of the Dialogue Journals as a Communicative Event

How can we view the development and accomplishment of the dialogue journals as a communicative event encompassing an entire school year? We might begin with the image of 26 students and the teacher entering the classroom on the first day, a wonderfully diverse group of persons who know very little about each other beyond their assigned social roles. Within each person, teacher as well as student, lies an unknown reservoir of experience, ideas, feelings and beliefs. Each person represents a personal universe, waiting to be known and to know through communication as a favorite quotation describes:

> Immensity is within ourselves
> It is attached to a sort of expansion
> of being that life curbs and caution
> arrests, but which starts again
> when we are alone. ("Poetics of Space," Gaston Bacheland)

In each dialogue journal, the initial discussion of daily events and problems, the sharing of opinions and desires, builds a foundation of understanding and knowledge. This foundation is built slowly, but for most students at some point in the year, the foundation becomes strong enough to allow venturing beyond the conventional boundaries of the student-teacher relationship to risk greater disclosure of the personal universe. For some students, this will be a venture into personal topics and personal interests--discussion of sports or a favorite puppy. For others, it will be a confrontation about some event in the classroom or the playground. These private concerns or disputed events greatly expand the range of shared social reality which can be freely discussed and commented on, whether or not agreement is reached. Such expansion from impersonal to personal concerns, feelings and opinions continuously establish a stronger foundation of 'mutuality' or shared understanding, by incorporating differences of opinion and personal perspectives into a common discussion about how to construe the world and one's place in it.

An example of the crucial interdependency of a mutual foundation and risktaking is shown in one interaction from Gordon's journal, in which two parallel topics are simultaneously carried forth:

Feb. 14

S: I have been training for three½ years. I have a metal and more ribbons. I love swimming. Most people might not think that I look like a swimer but I am. Would it be alright if I brought my ribbons and metal? I dedacaded one of my years not swimming but body training and building. My Couch sugested it and I am still training

T: I'd love to see your medals and ribbons. Do bring them. You have a strong, powerful body and I can certainly see that developing that body and those muscles would be important!

(Gordon's journal, continued)

S: and bulding, and practicing.
I HATE DEENIE ALFRED YOU.
AND THE BOOK LADY WHO COMES
TO MY CLASS. AND IF YOU TELL
ANYON WHAT I WROTE BOY YOU DONT
KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN

HATE

of course Im doing beter in math
much better. I think that I
did pretty good on my test to.

T: You waste too much time hating! One day you like someone and the next day you "hate" them. Are you sure you aren't using hate for a temper you aren't controlling? Mrs. Windsor certainly has done nothing to cause such a temper problem.

Without the ongoing topic of Gordon's love of swimming, the open confrontation over his continuing misbehavior and violent temper outbursts would not be sustained. The interweaving of the ongoing positive topics appears to be a mutual, intentional bridge to maintain the dialogue while a difficult confrontation is worked out.

There is an alternating current in each dialogue journal across the year, as new understanding by each writer of the other creates a stronger framework for new exploration of oneself and the world. In some, as with Gordon, it is very obvious; in others, it may be so subtle as to escape our notice as outsiders. In only one or two journals was this growth in understanding and risk-taking seemingly absent, from both the teacher's perspective and ours.

The teacher is as much engaged in this journey as the students, and equally dependent on the creation of initial rapport for the opportunity to take the risk of more open expression of opinions and of confrontation.

What Dialogue Journal Writing Can Tell Us about Writing and Writing Research

We believe that this study of the dialogue journal writing has a number of implications for writing research. These implications from the descriptive analyses are presented here as useful recommendations for classroom practice, and as the basis for future research to test out each tentative conclusion as a formal hypothesis.

1. Writing can be a natural and functional process for young writers in a literate society, even though it requires learning to use physical tools. Scollon and Scollon (1981), Anderson (1981) and Harste (1982) have demonstrated the "literateness" of our culture even for pre-schoolers, but schools haven't often allowed students to use the natural, informal modes of writing that would be most accessible and functional for young writers. Writing dialogue can help naturally out of speech dialogue, and can build on the child's enormous competence at using language to get things done (Griffin and Shuy, 1978).

   What can make writing a "natural" form of communication for beginning writers (and more advanced ones as well) is to have writing take place under the conditions essential for any communication event to occur. These basic conditions are that writers are responsible for choosing their own topics and may comment in any way they wish, there is a concrete situation and functional relationship between writer and audience, and the audience interacts or responds to the message in some immediate and concrete way. Writing under these conditions allows beginning writers to draw on their communicative competence in oral language. Only after much experience in such functional, interactive, self-directed writing, should young writers be asked to 'imagine' an audience and communicative situation.

Our strongest recommendation for the use of dialogue journals is as an initial developmental step for beginning writers to provide extensive opportunity for successful communication in written language before asking them to try a more complex form.

It would seem particularly appropriate to focus dialogue journals on communicative functions children have not yet perfected. Primary grade children are often proficient at writing stories, if we will just "let them write," as Don Graves has amply demonstrated (1981, 1982). But in both oral and written language, they need to develop their ability to give reasons, describe events accurately, express feelings - and these functions can become the core of a continuing conversation with the teacher. Many of our sixth grade students would likely have difficulty with writing persuasive arguments in an essay form; in their journals, they made extensive use of the right to complain to develop the felicity of their complaints, and began constructing persuasive arguments in their discourse.

2. Writing can be a mode of learning about oneself, a way of acquiring that critically important knowledge necessary for understanding and regulating one's own behavior and thereby gaining autonomy. Writing in the journals allows private and uninterrupted discourse, which is not evaluated for correctness of surface forms. Such writing is an enabling condition for the articulation of new feelings and new conceptions about oneself and the world which can be summed up as "self-knowledge" in the broad sense (Toulmin,1977). This self-knowledge - of one's wants and desires, of one's actions and abilities, of cause and effect in interpersonal relations - is the basis for rational action and more socially mature thought. Charles Taylor points out that desires, aspirations, values, feelings do not "exist" in the same way that a fully independent object in the world does; such inner states of being, which we can sum up as a "personal perspective," require linguistic formulation which in turn shapes the sense of what one wants or feels (1977). Certain modes of experience, including reflective thought, are not possible without a certain kind of self description in symbolic concepts.

Writing such as occurs in the dialogue journal may thus provide students a means for examining developmental crises as they occur and achieving a healthy resolution of each stage. Developmental theories generally hold that such resolution is necessary for advancement to the next stage or task (Erickson, 1950).

3. Writing is a tool of thought. The general attitude of psychologists

and child development theorists is that writing and language use in general have little effect on learning and cognitive development; language only 'reflects' thought (Olson,1970). Our analysis suggests an alternative view. Meaningful writing about self-selected topics in an interactive context can contribute to a student's self-knowledge and formation of concepts and principles (or "constructs") for understanding the world (Emig,1977; Nystrand,1980).

Dialogue journal writing creates ideal conditions for the elaboration of what one is thinking, the "deliberate structuring of a web of meaning" which Vygotsky described as an attribute of written language (1934/62). Writing in the dialogue journals requires the students to attach words to their experience, to articulate in symbolic form their kinesthetically and visually encoded experience (Bruner,1973). This active construction of knowledge involves the assimilation of new information from daily experience, and as we have seen, from the teacher's comments about that experience, into an existing framework of concepts. Over time, we have been privileged to witness how this process leads to change or enlargement ("accommodation" in Piagetian terminology) in the student's existing framework itself. When new knowledge - about "how I feel," "what I did," what is true about the world - doesn't fit with one's existing schemata, the juxtaposition of these conflicting claims about what is true can lead to disequilibrium and a search for a new way to integrate the conflict. In science, Kuhn has described this paradigm shift occurring at a macro-level across many minds (1962).

In individuals, the same need to reduce cognitive conflict occurs and leads Gordon from believing that 'all new ideas are hard and unpleasant' to a recognition of exceptions, to a final change in one of his core beliefs: 'new ideas are hard but fun when you understand them!'

Effective written communication usually requires more explicit referencing to events, objects, actions, selection of details relevant to a topic and an attempt to establish the relationships among events, actors, actions, objects and feelings in the writer's phenomenological stream of experience. Great writers are honored for their ability to "run order through chaos," in the elegant phrase of Henry Adams, to communicate the meaning - the relationships among things - hidden in the confusing, chaotic experience of human life. Because we have not allowed beginning writers the opportunity to write under the same conditions as 'great' writers - to a real audience, about personally selected, meaningful topics, for real purposes such as persuading, complaining, clarifying, requesting - we have not seen that writing can be an act of thinking and understanding for the young writer as well.

The dialogue journal writing makes just such cognitive demands on the writer and involves active transformation of experience into words rather than imitative copying of the content and form of a provided text.

In arguing that this writing represents active learning and transformation of thought, we cannot leave out the major effect of the teacher's written feedback. Her sensitive extensions of the students' thinking into new (for them) and more adequate, rational ways of viewing the world are essential to the change which occurs. Rommetveit, a linguist and psychologist of language use, has pointed out that any dialogue between two human participants involves a continuous effort to agree on how to categorize the world (1974, 1979). In some of the journals, where there is little mutuality of understanding established early in the year between student and teacher, her efforts are not incorporated. But other journals, in which this basic rapport and trust were established early, show the student becoming actively engaged in struggling to understand how the teacher described the world and understood events. The privacy and opportunity for both writers to elaborate more on their thoughts without interruption made possible a continuous restructuring and expansion of perception and understanding.

4. Interactive writing leads to independence in writing. One concern about engaging students in dialogue writing is whether students will be enabled to write more independently as a result of this experience. This concern will require experimental research to provide definitive answers. However, we can point to substantial evidence that within the dialogue writing, students are practicing increasingly self-directed forms of discourse, such as persuasive arguments and extended narration, without relying on the teacher's questions, elaborations and other supportive comments. Such practice would seem to be readily transferable to the tasks of writing essays, letters, and reports as independent efforts.

A second point for further exploration is the value of the dialogue writing for acquiring those intellectual processes which are basic to effective written communication in our culture, such as topic focus, elaboration, and sense of audience or taking the reader's perspective (Odell,1977; Barritt and Kroll,1978). These processes, requisites for writing independently, are systematically encouraged and developed through the nature of the teacher's responses.

By reading the teacher's comments which are full of clarifying questions about the topic and full of attempts to restate or expand on the topics just introduced, students learn a great deal about the needs of an audience for new, relevant information. One student said in his end-of-year interview that "At first I just wrote little things like "Today I had a pretty good day" and just things that aren't really interesting for her to read...But now I'm starting to write a lot of things that she likes to read." (Carlyle, Spring Interview).

This provision of a different perspective on the same event (which Flavell identifies as the first of four components necessary for role-taking (1974) increases student awareness that one's audience often has a different point of view and "pushes" the students to give more information and to elaborate on specific topics of interest. This elaboration in turn leads to writing that is more focused on a single topic, and therefore creates the integration of propositions across larger units of thought characteristic of written language.

Interactive or dialogue writing, if it is about topics of immediate concern to the students, can model for the students alternative strategies for representing the same experience. Thus, modes of written exposition which are just beyond the student's capacity to produce unassisted can be first accomplished and gradually acquired through interactive writing. This requires a genuine dialogue with someone who is more proficient at seeing and describing the world. Our data certainly give evidence that students in elementary school who are not particularly "advanced" writers can begin learning the structure and demands of expository writing through a written dialogue with a more experienced partner. Moffett clearly placed dialogues first in his developmental scheme of writing (1968). Such writing would precede being asked to produce decontextualized monologues (in the form of essays) or topics dictated or framed by the school.

A corollary conclusion is that we may be limiting many students' development in writing by making the ability to write well without any assistance the prerequisite to engaging students in writing which is meaningful and functional to them. (A study by Marcia Pitts at the Center for the Study of Evaluation (1978) has showed that the students with most difficulty in writing are given the least practice in actually producing extended discourse.) In contrast, dialogic written interaction allows these learners, as Vygotsky and Wertsch argue, to "participate in strategic processes that they will only subsequently understand" (Wertsch,1980, p. 159).

5. *Functional writing facilitates the acquisition of more appropriate forms in written language*. Student difficulties with spelling, grammatical constructions, and other surface aspects of written language are not a barrier to communicative competence in writing. We did not analyse their writing from a 'deficit model' perspective, except for the spelling paper, largely because the immediate impact of reading the journals made clear to us that their writing, as already competent speakers of the language they are using, is abundantly clear and coherent within the dialogue context.

Some research has been conducted on the relationship between functional language *use* and acquisition of language *forms* in oral language,such as Corsetti's study of ESL speakers (1979). Corsetti found that having students carry out functional dialogues involving specific purposes and participant roles in real-life situations, such as apologizing for being late, warning a friend about danger, etc. improved the experimental subject's skills in using correct English forms (tenses, etc.), in comparison to a traditional class who were drilled and corrected on forms. Others, including Stevick (1980) have also stressed that functional language use will lead to more rapid progress in correct use of forms. There is a great need for research on this issue in writing, and Kreeft from this research team has begun a study of the relationship between acquisition of English grammar and the functional use of language in the dialogue journals of bilingual students from the 1980-81 class of Mrs. R.

6. Individualized, self-directed, functional writing requires individualized assessment. One of our strongest results is that we did not find any generalized, or group, effects of dialogue writing among this group of students. That is, from our research we cannot draw any conclusions that engaging in dialogue writing will lead to a statistically significant change for a majority of students on any single outcome measure of writing skill. This conclusion, however, is a positive one, for it validates the fact that these dialogue journals are used as a means of individual communication, and not a directed instructional technique to develop paragraphing, spelling, or cohesive writing.

Because the dialogue journal as practiced so effectively in this classroom is not used to teach any one skill, there is no reason to assume that any particular general effect will be produced. In fact, the paper on topic development through elaborated discourse (by Staton) shows only minimal class-wide change in elaboration, but significant change for one subpopulation - the boys. We believe assessment of all the journals on any single outcome measure would show the same results.

In part, this finding is due to the relatively short span of time - some eight months in total - which our data cover. But our analyses suggest that each student is acquiring greater written competence in using language along an individual path of development. In order to assess whether most students' writing "changed" one would need to establish individual baselines on a large number of measures and then determine how each student changed along each dimension. Our intuitive impression of this pattern is that it would look much like the results of the analysis of language functions represented on page 86a of the Final Report. In that schematic representation, each student began at a different place on the hypothetical continuum and showed a different pattern of 'progress.'

Writing research, like educational research in general, has not addressed the issue of assessing development from an individual perspective. It is far easier to pick one attribute and study how students learn it under controlled conditions. However, the new research on writing development of Graves (1982) and Harste (1982), as well as ours, has begun to at least describe the complexities of individual student growth in written competence and to expand the universe of relevant attributes on which to base assessments of progress.

We conclude that for this kind of data, research will need to continue developing stronger theoretical rationales and methodologies to integrate individual case studies across subjects, so that the individual configuration of changes are not masked by group averages on a few measures,before we can accurately describe and assess student progress.

Because the dialogue journal as practiced in this classroom is not used to teach any one skill, there is no reason to assume that any particular general effect will be produced. In fact, the paper on topic development through elaborated discourse (by Staton) shows minimal class-wide change in elaboration but significant change for one sub-population - the boys. We believe using any single outcome measure of writing skill such as elaborativeness or fluency would show a similar pattern - that is, lack of significant class-wide change but a strong shift upward for some sub-group of students.

Summary

These major implications for writing instruction and research come from the notion that writing is a natural use of language for communicative purposes. Specific instructional activities, in our view, are meaningful to students only within purposeful, goal-directed activities. The teacher is responsible for creating such goal-directed activities (such as "telling me how you felt about the things we did today," one of the primary goals of the dialogue journals) but then allows students to find their own way to accomplish that goal.

Most research on students' writing has focused on teacher-directed, planned writing assignments following the traditional discourse forms of writing - narration, description, expository essay, which both students and teachers may consider more "real," or at least, more socially valued writing. Our study, in contrast, has been concerned with the functional uses of writing, as a way of asking what writing could be as an activity of immediate value to individuals in this culture. If writing research remains limited to only the traditional writing events of students in classrooms, we will be studying only constrained, often artificial uses of language which violate most of the maxims which characterize language use and which ignore the child's natural communicative competence. Research which is limited to the essayist tradition tells us only what children do do under typical composition writing circumstances and not what they can do under maximally revealing circumstances.

The contrast between the rather dull, uninspired writing of many students in response to assigned writing tasks and the forceful, clear and concise writing which is so abundant in the dialogue journals reminds us of Emerson's observation about youth in the essay on "Self-Reliance":

> Do not think that the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! in the next room, who spoke so clear and emphatic? It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries.

Dialogue journal writing clearly allows teachers to become a 'contemporary' of their students, and clear and emphatic writing is the result.

The Dialogue Journal as Personalized Education

Beyond these substantive implications for writing and writing instruction, the dialogue journals provide us with a better understanding of the nature of education itself. Although we have focused on communication and written communicative competence in this initial study, we cannot ignore the much larger picture of the educational process that reading the journals affords.

The dialogue journals from this particular classroom during a particular year contain an extraordinary record of how a teacher and students jointly accomplish a year of learning. The journals make available in tangible form the heart of any human education: the real dialogue which occurs between teacher and student. We have all had intuitive glimpses of this dialogue and have tried to capture it with observational studies and reminiscences of teachers who listened to us, with whom we could talk after school. The raw data of the dialogue journals goes far beyond any data we have seen from classroom research, as a unique record of the daily interactions between teacher and students in which education is individualized at the *person* level rather than at the skill level.

The dialogue journals document and exemplify the social interaction which is essential for human learning. Each interaction in the journal records actual dialogue between a young member of the human community and a more experienced member charged with the task of human education. Knowledge and learning begins only as the child enters into social interaction with more experienced members of the culture. The interactive social dialogue between child and adult is gradually internalized and becomes the basis for "inner speech" - the thoughts which guide and plan behavior. This internalization permits increasing autonomy or independence from outside influence (McNamee,1979; Vygotsky,1978; Wertsch,1980).

The teacher in introducing concepts is giving the students the needed "tools for reasoning" about events in the much more complex social world of adolescence and adulthood. Such *concepts* as the relationship between learning and enjoyment - "learning is fun if you understand what you're doing" - cannot be acquired through physical manipulation of an objective world, as can the earlier concepts of concrete operations, but require as well social interaction. In this sense, as Hamlyn (1973) and others in the interactionist or "constructivist" tradition of epistemology remind us, objective knowledge is also socially constructed and rests on prior intersubjectivity or agreement in forms of life (Wittgenstein,1953). To such entries as "I had a fight with Joan," the teacher's response deals with how to make and keep friends, raising the interaction to a higher level of generalization. The teacher's comments elaborate and add information about the event at a more mature level, and the student is drawn into discussing how one event was "like" the last one.

Jerome Bruner some years ago suggested that the role of the teacher involves more than just motivating students to learn a task or providing them with a model to imitate. Rather, he suggested that:

> ....what the teacher must be, to be an effective competence model, is a day to day working model with whom to interact. It is not so much that the teacher provides a model to imitate. Rather, it is that the teacher can become a part of the student's internal dialogue - somebody whose respect he wants, someone whose standards he wishes to make his own. It is like becoming a speaker of a language one shares with somebody. The language of that interaction becomes a part of oneself, and the standards of style and clarity that one adopts for that interaction become a part of one's own standards. (1966, p. 124)

We have come to think of this teacher as the embodiment of all that is best about education, and we suggest that it is in studying teachers like her, in the daily act of teaching, that we will find some of the answers about how education works. To do this, however, requires that we understand and value the world of a teacher as he or she experiences it and become willing to enter that world, to document the concepts, beliefs, and actions which create and maintain it. In the Benedictine Order of monks, there is a belief that if all written records on the monastic life and its practices and rules were lost, one would only have to follow the abbot as he walked through the day, to recover the Benedictine Rule. Good teachers, of which Mrs. R. is only one instance, can become just this "Living Rule" for research. In their knowledge and experience we can find an understanding of how education actually "happens" for children and perhaps make sense of all our variables and statistical relationships.

Educational research has tried to understand the educational process by breaking it down into smaller and smaller components, into skills which can be hierarchized and concepts which can be programmed and measured. In doing so, we have begun to ignore the human art of teaching and cannot seem to find ways to put it all back together again, so that our knowledge matches the teacher's and students' experience of it.

Shulman has argued that the new direction of educational research should be to write "grammars" of the behavior of exemplary teachers (1970). Along with other descriptive studies by Clark and Florio (1981), Mehan (1979) and Griffin and Shuy (1978), we hope that this study of the daily thinking, feelings, and concerns of the teacher in interaction may be a contribution toward the task of putting our extensive knowledge about learning back into a holistic framework, as a natural human experience which all humans are innately programmed to do well.

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